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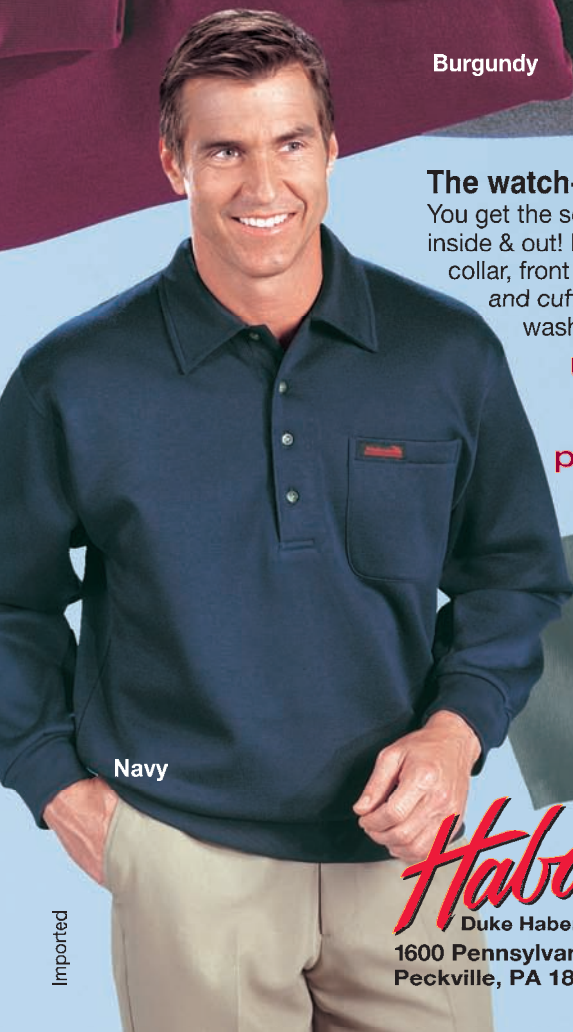
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THE AMERICAN Legion

NOVEMBER 2004
Vol. 157, No. 5

For God and Country

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Cpl. Terrence Van Doorn enjoys a few moments with his wife, Stephanie, and 1-year-old daughter, Azaliyah, before shipping out to Iraq. Van Doorn's infantry battalion is assigned to 1st Marine Division in western Iraq's al-Anbar province. The deployment is expected to last seven months. *David McNew/Getty Images*

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On their records

I'm amazed at the amount of effort by both candidates to woo the veteran vote. I can't believe they think my vote will be based upon the four and a half months one spent in



Vietnam or the Air National Guard time of the other. My vote will be based on what they did when they made their own decisions – Kerry in the Senate and Bush in the

White House. We need to pay attention to what they've done out of the military, not in it.

– Pete Doe, York, Maine

Sudden respect

Sen. John Kerry says, "If I saw somebody burning a flag, personally, I'd probably punch them out and stomp on them." Does this man – this monstrously wealthy effete product of Swiss boarding schools, this friend of the most vulgar people in Hollywood, this man who has spent his public life up to the past year sneering at the flag and veterans – really expect us to believe this is how he feels? I believe he thinks this ridiculous statement is something the average veteran would say. He may have chuckled about it – perhaps in French – with Teresa over white wine and brie. Does he expect us to believe the real John Kerry goes around physically assaulting people who show disrespect to the flag?

Forget for a moment that the grammar in the statement is incorrect. Forget, too, that no one would ever elect to the presidency a man who cannot control his emotions. The original cover of Kerry's 1971 book, "The New Soldier," had people on the cover holding the flag upside down as they mock the flag-raising at Iwo Jima. When and where did Kerry discover this newfound respect for the flag?

– William A. Roskey, Ames, Iowa

Unfair penalty

In 1996, the Clinton administration made VA medical services

available to all veterans. On Jan. 17, 2003, the Bush administration stopped enrolling (some) veterans whose annual household incomes are above \$30,000. Why should veterans, who risked our lives for our country, be penalized for coming home and going to work?

– Allan Young, Springfield, Mo.

No such cut

John Kerry says President Bush is cutting VA funds. This is a lie, according to VA's own Web page, which clearly shows that Bush has increased funding by \$3.2 billion. Also, Kerry voted against concurrent receipt both times it came up, according to his voting record. Now he says he is for it?

– Daniel Gray, Defiance, Ohio

Bush's free pass

You ask Kerry about his 1971 antiwar testimony before Congress but fail to ask Bush why he attacked Iraq, has failed to capture Osama bin Laden, and how he and his administration feel about being labeled "chicken hawks" for avoiding the Vietnam draft. Also, your interview tells us a number of Vietnam War veterans have "mixed feelings" about Kerry's antiwar testimony, but you don't mention any veterans having "mixed feelings" about Bush avoiding active duty through family connections. This is pretty shoddy reporting.

– L. Carolan, San Diego

Enough with records

Newspapers and television have been reporting on the military records of President Bush and candidate John Kerry. These two men's records should not be an issue, since both men were honorably discharged. Let the official paperwork be the word.

People who try to demean either man's military service hurt the veterans community and forget that wearing our country's uniform in any form is honorable. Do we look down on the veteran who was drafted compared to a veteran who enlisted? Do combat veterans look down on veterans who serve their country stateside? Do disabled veterans think veterans who weren't wounded served less honorably? Does a career military person think the person who did the minimum is less honorable? Every person who takes the oath to preserve and defend the U.S. Constitution, under any circumstances, did it with pride and provided this defense by performing whatever job the Department of Defense gave him.

The issue is who will be the best commander in chief of our military forces and who will give our veterans the best care and benefits after they have served. Some of the best veterans advocates have been non-veterans. Consider these questions as you vote for our next president, and don't listen to all the negative input by both sides.

– Earl A. Rients, Pontiac, Ill.

Bush's VA record

John Kerry says he's been fighting for 35 years to "plus up" VA funding. What does "plus up" mean? Does this translate to "increase"? I'll take President Bush for another four years. Although he does mangle it sometimes, he speaks English. His record with the VA health-care system has been to increase

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the budget by more than twice the amount of increase during President Clinton's entire tenure in office. He also seems to be honest, which doesn't appear to be a trait Kerry espouses.

— Robert D. Bradshaw, Bellevue, Neb.

Used again?

I understand our organization's commitment to bipartisanship, but having John Kerry in our magazine and addressing our convention is a slap in the face of every Legionnaire who served in Vietnam. It wasn't too awfully long ago that his words and actions toward our country and his fellow troops would have resulted in his being hanged or summarily shot. Instead, here we are, in 2004, honoring him with an opportunity to yet again use us for his own self-interest. Shame on you.

— Howard Pritz, Midlothian, Va.

Insult to veterans

A swipe at Kerry is a blow to the face of every veteran. The audacity to smear any veteran's military service for the sole purpose of trying to gain political advantage is appalling. At a time when veterans are again publicly appreciated and respected, it's disgusting to see how low one will stoop.

— Jim Shannon, Canton, Ohio

Focus on current war

The current emphasis on who did what during the Vietnam era is distracting our attention from more important issues confronting us today. Both political parties seem to ignore the war we are currently waging.

It is critical we stabilize conditions in Iraq and remove our troops in an orderly fashion. To correctly do this, we need a leader who is intelligent, courageous and meticulous. We can't just drop everything and hastily pull out, leading to anarchy and civil war, but neither should we continue to sacrifice our brave servicemen and women. We need to plan for the future, not wallow in the past.

— Stan Silver, Wyckoff, N.J.

Blind to backlog

President Bush brags about the fabulous job Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi has done in reducing the backlog and waiting lists for veterans seeking medical care. But in the same issue, under Veterans Benefits, a headline states, "Veterans' Claims, Appeals, Remands Still Stacking Up." According to the article, 86,000 appeals were pending in 2000. Since then we've seen a steady rise in the backlog of new appeals, which today stands at 130,000 and rising. Why wasn't President Bush challenged on his statement?

— Jack Hersh, San Carlos, Calif.

Time for a change

I don't think President Bush answered the questions in the September issue, while I think John Kerry answered all but one. As both a veteran and 21-year Legion member, I will support Kerry. I feel another four years with President Bush would be ruinous for America. He is keeping his budget secret until after the election, which tells me we'll see more cuts in our social and health-care programs.

— Dan Bynum, Eldridge, Iowa

Kerry, Legionnaire

I was surprised to see that John Kerry is a member of The American Legion, especially in light of the statement he made in his book "The New Soldier": "We will not readily join The American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars — in fact, we will find it hard to join anything at all, and when we do, we will demand relevancy such as other organizations have recently been unable to provide." And I thought Kerry is from Massachusetts. Why does he belong to a Legion post in New Hampshire?

— Richard S. Churchill, Quincy, Mass.

Evasions and lies

John Kerry says families have conducted "bake sales" to buy body armor to send to their kids in Iraq. If Kerry had not voted against appropriations for military supplies, "bake sales" would not have been necessary. He also

says he "never pointed to the individual veterans." Then who did he claim "raped," "cut off ears" and committed dozens of other horrendous acts in Vietnam? He wasn't "proud" of us then.

— Raymond Curiale, Glen Head, N.Y.

Who benefits?

The candidates' responses to the question on outsourcing are particularly telling. John Kerry gave a specific response on why he is against it. The president evidently believes outsourcing is good, for he skirted the issue and made no real attempt to answer the question. It should come as no surprise that at least one of the president's economic advisers has said outsourcing is good for the economy. What needs answered is which companies and countries benefit the most.

— Wendell Liemohn, Louisville, Tenn.

Bush falls short

President Bush says "increasing immigration enforcement will not by itself solve our problems, because our immigration laws are not working." He doesn't have any interest or inclination to enforce our current immigration laws, or see through any meaningful new or improved immigration laws. Bush recently rejected a proposal from Sen. Robert Byrd, D-W.Va., to hire more Border Patrol agents, instead approving millions in aid for Iraq — specifically, to seal that country's borders.

Bush's immigration position is clear: he prefers to leave U.S. citizens vulnerable to terror attack, diseases, social costs, job displacement and a \$10 billion bill annually inflicted by illegal aliens. Hopefully he'll be joining his father as a one-term president.

— Pete Testa, Millington, N.J.

GOP not innocent

As President Reagan liked to say, "There you go again." In "Bush and Kerry Vie for the Hearts of Veterans," Larry Sabato writes that "veterans traditionally lean Republican mostly because of the GOP's emphasis on military spending and national security." This is just another in an unend-

ing string of slurs on Democrats in your publication. If the GOP had really been dedicated to national security, chances are good to excellent that 9/11 would not have occurred. Instead, the GOP was interested in two things prior to that: undoing anything Clinton did or started, and providing financial rewards to Bush's campaign backers through immoral tax cuts for the wealthy.

— Noah Williamson, Mount Ida, Ark.

Man under fire

I read the article "Bush and Kerry Vie for the Hearts of Veterans," and the author should be ashamed of himself. He says Bush is a wartime president; he is not. Congress must declare war. I am a veteran with 18 years of service, both active and reserve. I would follow Kerry into battle and hopefully into the White House. Let's become aware and elect a man who has proven himself under fire rather than a man who never even showed up for the National Guard.

— Dale Weiss, Bethlehem, Pa.

Thank the Democrats

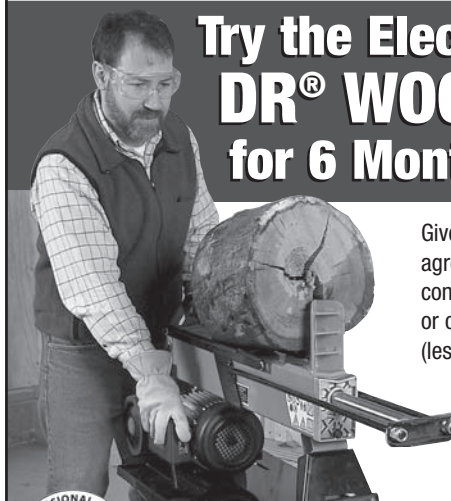
As someone who spent 32 years in veterans employment and training, I fail to understand how any veteran can take the position that Republicans are better for veterans than Democrats. Every benefit we enjoy was given or adopted by Democratic presidents or congresses. On the other hand, every cutback in benefits, military personnel and base closure was headed by Republican administrations. They like to blame the current manpower shortage on President Clinton, but it started under President George H.W. Bush and Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney. Now, as vice president, Cheney would have you believe that it was all the Democrats' fault.

— Joseph McCarthy, Reading, Pa.

No friend to us

I had to chuckle at the piece "Why Veterans Should Elect Democrats to Congress." The article is too long for me to pick through item by item, outlining the untruths, so I'll limit my

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comments to a few major observations about the Democratic Party as a whole:

- At the time, not one Senate Democrat voted to impeach President Clinton, the president who “loathed the military,” lied to his draft board and to a professor of military science at the University of Arkansas about his military intentions, and protested on foreign soil our participation in the Vietnam War.

- Almost exclusively through the efforts of Democratic Senate and House members has the amendment to protect our flag not already become law.

- Legislation to improve veterans benefits that is supported by Democrats in the House and Senate is often moot when one also realizes those same lawmakers pursue and too often achieve similar benefits in their myriad social programs for people who have done nothing for the good of this country. Lately, these beneficiaries have been non-U.S. citizens.

Citizens who believe the Democratic Party to be a friend of the military are only fooling themselves.

— Charles P.B. Busbey,
Dripping Springs, Texas

More to the story

Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert tries to persuade Legion members to vote Republican because he claims Republicans supported concurrent receipt of military retired pay and VA disability pay. The real story is that Hastert held this legislation hostage in committee because he knew it would have been overwhelmingly passed in a floor vote. Not until Democrats shamed the Republicans into releasing the bill with a discharge petition did the legislation pass. As for health care, Hastert can obfuscate the issue all he wants with misleading statistics, but the fact remains that under President Bush, Category 8 veterans have been denied health care.

— Gerald J. Ladouceur, Slingerlands, N.Y.

Sad state

Neither Nancy Pelosi nor Dennis

Hastert seriously addresses the inequities of the military pay system for either active duty or retirees. It's a sad state of affairs when both parties feel all they have to do is spout vague rhetoric in an attempt to garner enough military votes to put their candidate over the top.

I offer four easy proposals to seriously and beneficially impact quality-of-life issues faced by our military members:

- Tie military retirement pay to the active-duty pay schedule. This amounts to a fair COLA adjustment and not the currently ridiculous methodology resulting in a quick evaporation of military retirement pay as an effective pension program.

- Inaugurate a real veterans preference program. If you are a qualified veteran, you get the job, effectively ending the process of putting veterans at the mercy of race- and gender-based affirmative action goals.

- Loosen disability qualifications. Hastert's boast of 40 percent dual compensation is laughable when juxtaposed against VA's stringent and cost-driven refusal to properly qualify veterans who are in pain and have served their country.

- Delegate to commanding officers the powers of an election official and announce the military vote command by command. Since no president would want to claim the title “commander in chief” and have it known that his party lost the military vote by 90 percent, each candidate would immediately begin to court the military vote with a real benefits package.

— Matthew M. O'Connell, Topeka, Kan.

Vast improvement

In September's issue, Nancy Pelosi continues the negative campaign against the current administration. Where were she and her party during the eight years of the Clinton administration, when the defense budget was cut, when troops applied for food stamps to feed their families and when veterans were ignored? VA's medical budget has increased every year under the Bush admin-

istration, over \$1 billion a year – an increase of \$4.8 billion since this president took office. Still not enough, but a vast improvement over Pelosi and her party's eight years in power. That's one reason this veteran will vote to elect Republicans to Congress.

— Harley Hildebrand, Lacey, Wash.

Other choices

Your Veterans Pre-Election Primer is exclusively devoted to what Democrats and Republicans have to say on the issues, as if we are not already bombarded with those messages daily in the mainstream media. Of what help is it to veterans to simply replay them? If The American Legion is serious about educating veterans, devote an entire edition to interviews with presidential candidates from political parties denied coverage by the media. I believe a lot of veterans would be interested in hearing the views of the America First, Constitution, Green and Reform parties, among others. As long as veterans and other Americans believe they only have one choice – the Republicans – this nation will continue to decay from within.

— Donald H. Walker, Fowlerville, Mich.

Great strides

I'm a sergeant first class in the Minnesota National Guard, stationed in Iraq, and a member of American Legion Post 257 in Springfield, Minn. My wife sends me *The American Legion Magazine* in care packages. I like the articles, and had to write about August's “From Factory to Foxhole.” I totally agree that the military has made great strides in the movement of equipment, personnel and supplies. Gen. John W. Handy should be proud, and I'm proud to be part of the greatest fighting force on this earth. Just looking at the numbers in the article is mind-boggling, especially when they cover only a five- to six-month period. I want to express my thanks to TRANSCOM.

— J.D. Davidson, Springfield, Minn.

Hospice angels

I just finished reading Keith

Renninson's article "Compassion at Death's Door" (August), and I must add my thoughts to his. My wife of 60 years, Ruby, suffered from extreme difficulty in breathing. In February, our doctor advised that he could do nothing more to help her and that he would call a hospice. Within 20 minutes, a hospice representative came to speak with me. In the short time it took to get her discharged from the hospital and drive to our home, hospice had set up a hospital room in front of her favorite window so she could continue to watch her beloved birds and neighbors.

Not enough kind words are in the English language to properly praise the people of hospice. I call them my angels, and though my sweetheart went to be with our Lord on March 4, they still check on me by phone and mail. God bless them.

— Joseph A. Harrison, La Plata, Md.

False hope?

The short article "Stem-Cell Research Not So Partisan" (Living Well, August) reports on a poll publicized by the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation that shows many conservatives favor embryonic stem-cell research. It said nothing about adult stem cells, a curious omission. The difference is important; embryonic stem cells have not helped even one human being. Adult stem cells have helped people and are treating human diseases right now. The embryonic stem-cell research so highly touted cruelly misleads those suffering from terrible afflictions, fraught with terrifying implications reminiscent of Nazi medical "experiments."

As Florida congressman and physician Dave Weldon reported on the House floor in June, of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's \$80 million research and education budget, \$3 million was spent on embryonic stem-cell research and \$15 million on adult stem-cell research. Why would the organization direct research that way if embryonic stem cells hold out great hope?

— Edward W. Atkinson,
Princeton Junction, N.J.

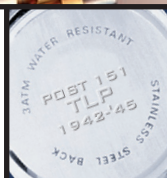
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To those forever changed by war

I can talk about service, and I will. I can talk about how service drives membership, how American Legion posts must publicly work their programs to show that veterans are the patriotic fiber of our country. But such talk doesn't mean much until you have taken a seat next to a bandaged young man whose skull was recently crushed in combat. He will never be the same. After meeting him and others like him, neither will I.

He is one of nearly 10,000 U.S. troops, as of this writing, who have been medically evacuated from the Iraq and Afghanistan operations in the war on terrorism. I met him in a restaurant in Washington, D.C., where every Friday night, wounded soldiers recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center are treated to a free dinner. The people you meet on those nights – or any time you should happen to visit Ward 57 at Walter Reed – will clarify your understanding of the war and of our duty, as Legionnaires, to support the new veterans coming home from it.

I met a man who has spent nine years in the regular Army. All he ever wanted to be was an infantry soldier. Last summer, in Iraq, he took a bullet in the back that rendered him, in his words, “unable to perform 100 percent as an infantryman anymore.” He is resigned to the fact that he will have to retire from the Army he loves and restart life with a service-connected disability.

I met a man from Ohio, an Army Reservist who lost a leg in combat. He is learning to get along without it. His wife was with him. They expressed no regrets, only an understanding that he was part of something greater. We talked about college football.

I met a general whose son recently lost an arm in combat. It was hard to digest the complexity of that sacrifice, between officer and soldier, father and son.

I met more than 50 such men and their families. I heard no self pity or despair. I listened intently to their stories and undaunted enthusiasm. They showed courage at the onset of a journey into the uncharted waters of a life irreversibly changed by war. In time, they will transition from DoD to VA, from wounded soldiers to disabled veterans. That's where we come in.

Similar wounded U.S. troops occupied the minds and hearts of those war-weary soldiers who met in Paris in 1919 and decided that caring for disabled veterans and their families would be a fundamental duty of a new organization they would call The American Legion. It is also a timeless duty. Now is our time.

This month we celebrate Veterans Day across the country. Wreaths are placed, speeches given, war stories swapped and dinner tables set in honor of all who swore with their lives to protect our blessings. I will undoubtedly be at such an event. But my heart will be on Ward 57 with those who are coming home, and I will remind my fellow veterans why we fight for VA health care, new career opportunities, well-funded educations, and for the benefits veterans and their families earned and deserve. They are not alone. The American Legion exists to serve them. That's what I mean when I talk about service.

Thomas P. Cadmus



National Commander Thomas P. Cadmus visits a patient at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. *Chester Simpson*

memoranda

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JOIN THE CADMUS CAVALRY

American Legion and Legion family members are now being mustered to join the Cadmus Cavalry. A special Thomas P. Cadmus Cavalry commemorative pin will be awarded to recruiters for every five new members they sign up for the 2005 membership year. Certification forms for the program may be submitted at any time but must arrive at National Headquarters on or prior to May 31, 2005. The national membership staff will confirm the new members, and pins will be mailed within three weeks. For more information, interested recruiters may contact Assistant Director Bill Sloan at (317) 630-1321, or at his email address wsloan@legion.org.

IMPACT '04 STRAW POLL RESULTS

The Legion's Impact '04 voter-education campaign has been a big hit on both the national and local levels. Legionnaires around the country, like those at Post 575 in Lubbock, Texas, hosted forums and events that drove awareness of veterans issues. In Lubbock, congressional candidates and VA Secretary Anthony Principi were among those asked to address major veterans issues heading into this month's general election. Look for results at www.impact04.legion.org from the Impact '04 online straw poll Nov. 1, between the top two presidential candidates. Most important, don't forget to vote Nov. 2. Veterans and their families can make an impact.



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Legalize medicinal marijuana



YES

Ethan Nadelmann

■ Nadelmann is founder and executive director of the Drug Policy Alliance, which promotes alternatives to the war on drugs.

Marijuana may be an unconventional medicine, but it works. Montel Williams, decorated former naval intelligence officer and talk-show host, uses medical marijuana to help him control the symptoms of multiple sclerosis. So does Keith Vines, an assistant district attorney, retired Air Force captain and former federal narcotics prosecutor living with AIDS.

These men are just two of hundreds of thousands of Americans who use marijuana to treat pain from accidents or debilitating conditions such as MS; to help restore appetite during chemotherapy; to treat the symptoms of AIDS, glaucoma and epilepsy; and for a host of other medical reasons.

The vast majority are law-abiding citizens who suffer from chronic pain and illness.

They use marijuana as medicine because it works better than anything else, with fewer negative side effects. Many never smoked marijuana until they became sick. Dozens of scientific studies demonstrate marijuana's safety and therapeutic value.

More than two thirds of Americans say marijuana should be legal for medical purposes – and that's the law now in 10 states.

Only one big problem: the federal government. The Clinton administration was callous, and the Bush administration has been downright cruel, arresting and prosecuting patients and providers. Federal drug enforcement agents, acting at the behest of the Justice Department, even raided a hospice and handcuffed frail and elderly patients who use marijuana as medicine.

The crackdown represents a shameful abuse of power: punishing sick people for using the medicine that works best for them, threatening doctors who exercise responsible medical judgment, and prohibiting state governments from acting in the interests of their own citizens.

It's time to tell the feds to get out of the doctor's offices and medicine cabinets, and out of the way of citizens who simply want to do what's right.



NO

John P. Walters

■ The federal drug czar under President Bush, Walters served as deputy director for supply reduction in the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

In America today, well-financed organizations and individuals are exploiting the pain of sick people, and the compassion of those who care about them, to legalize marijuana. Advocating for the use of a smoked weed under the guise of medicine is dishonest, scientifically irresponsible and contradictory to the high standards of quality effectiveness guaranteed by the U.S. Food and

Drug Administration.

Our medical system relies on proven scientific research to protect U.S. citizens from unsafe and ineffective products. Research has not demonstrated that smoked marijuana is helpful as medicine. The FDA has also stated that while marijuana use has no proven benefits, it does have long-term risks associated with it.

Furthermore, the British Lung Foundation says that smoking three to four marijuana cigarettes a day is as harmful for your lungs as smoking 20 tobacco cigarettes.

Some claim smoking marijuana helps ease symptoms associated with certain illnesses. The fact that smoking a joint may make them feel better is not in dispute. But simply feeling better is not the standard of modern medicine. If it were, snake oils and miracle potions would still line our medicine cabinets today.

The reality is that modern science has afforded us safe alternatives to smoking a crude plant. The FDA-approved drug Marinol makes the component in marijuana known as THC available in pill form. A product that delivers marijuana's THC through an inhaler is currently in development. The difference between these medicines and smoking a joint: the user does not get high.

Our veterans have sacrificed much to secure the blessings we enjoy today, including a safe and reliable medical system grounded in research and unparalleled in the world. We owe it to them to protect the integrity of that system and to prevent those seeking to legalize marijuana from riding on the coattails of our compassion.

THE HEART OF THE ISSUE

Several U.S. states have laws on the books permitting some form of medical marijuana use, a violation of federal law. The U.S. Supreme Court is expected to rule on a lower court decision barring federal action against medicinal marijuana use in California.

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Missing Pieces

U.S. intelligence has, since World War I, been a jigsaw puzzle of imprecision and uncertainty, ever a work in progress.

BY ALAN W. DOWD

In 1929, after learning about a code-breaking intelligence operation jointly run by the Army and State Department, Secretary of State Henry Stimson promptly de-funded it and declared, “Gentlemen do not read each other’s mail.”

Actually, they do, and they always have – even the gentlemen who founded the United States. In fact, in 1775, the Second Continental Congress created the Committee of Correspondence, which funded propaganda, performed covert operations, developed codes and – *gasp* – intercepted mail. Even back then, the country’s spies and military were not always on the same page: on one occasion, Gen. George Washington sent a task force to Bermuda with orders to seize gunpowder stored at the Royal arsenal. But when Washington’s ships arrived, the ammunition was gone – it had already been secretly acquired by agents of the Continental Congress.

Ever since, the high-stakes nature of intelligence operations and the self-critical nature of our representative system of government have conspired to expose intelligence failures and to impugn this “ungentlemanly” line of work. This has never been more apparent than in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks and Iraq war, as congressmen and commissions seem more concerned about fixing blame than fixing the intelligence problem.

The good news is that U.S. history offers a roadmap for how to deal with intelligence failures. The bad news: this isn’t the first time intelligence problems have led to serious political and military problems.

Blame Game. America’s entry into both world wars is often blamed on intelligence failures, but some of the blame is unfair. Intelligence services actually played a crucial role in uncovering the Zimmerman

Telegram, which detailed German plans to use Mexico as a proxy for war against the United States. Of course, it was British intelligence services that cracked the German code, underscoring how inadequate U.S. intelligence was.

The Army soon created Military Intelligence Section 8, which scored perhaps its most significant successes after the war. MI-8 broke the code Japanese negotiators used to cable back and forth to Tokyo during the Washington Naval Conference in 1921 and 1922, enabling U.S. diplomats to outmaneuver their counterparts. Before the decade was out, however, MI-8 would be out of business, thanks to Stimson. The embittered head of MI-8 later wrote a book airing the organization’s many secrets (sound familiar?), and the Japanese changed their codes.

The dismantling of MI-8 contributed to the country’s limited code-breaking capabilities at the onset



Lapse of intelligence

In its 521-page report on pre-war intelligence in Iraq, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence leveled heavy criticism on the Intelligence Community:

- The committee blasted the IC for succumbing to “group-think” that led analysts to interpret “ambiguous evidence as conclusively indicative of a WMD program” and for painting an intelligence picture that overstated the Iraqi threat.
- The committee found “significant shortcomings in almost every aspect of the Intelligence Community’s human-intelligence collection efforts.” Because of these shortcomings, the IC relied too heavily on defectors and foreign governments. This created a cycle that fed on itself and led to what Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kan., called “a global intelligence failure.”

Even so, the committee conceded that Iraq’s predisposition to deceive and unwillingness to come clean “could have led analysts to the reasonable conclusion” that Saddam still had his WMDs. Additionally, the committee concluded that IC assessments regarding Saddam’s missile arsenal, likely use of his own agents to conduct terror attacks, connections to certain terror groups and providing safe haven to al-Qaida, were all reasonable.

of World War II. Even so, America’s hamstrung intelligence assets actually sounded the alarm over Japan in time to avert disaster.

In January 1941, almost a full year before the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Secretary of the Navy predicted that hostilities on the part of Imperial Japan “would be initiated by a surprise attack upon the fleet or the naval base at Pearl Harbor.” Two weeks before the attacks, the Navy Department warned of “a surprise aggressive movement in any direction by the Japanese.” Similar warnings were issued Dec. 1 and Dec. 7.

One postwar inquiry concluded that officials in Washington and Hawaii “were fully conscious of the danger from air attack ... and they were adequately informed of the imminence of war.” Congress also found that the Navy and War departments had “failed to give careful and thoughtful consideration to the intercepted messages from Tokyo to Honolulu.”

Because of the imprecise nature of the warnings, U.S. officials in Hawaii were more concerned about protecting against unconventional attacks, such as sabotage by Japanese expatriates, than about bracing for a conventional military attack. (Oddly, on Sept. 11, 2001, Washington seemed more concerned about conventional threats from without – a rogue missile attack, a surging China, a crumbling Russia – than about unconventional attacks from within.)

Although the intelligence was imprecise, it was still sounding the alarm. Policymakers at Pearl and in D.C. were not yet listening – or, perhaps better said, the right policymakers weren’t listening. This foreshadows Sept. 11. In the run-up to Pearl Harbor, as in run-up to 9/11, intelligence assets knew something was coming – they just didn’t know exactly where or when. In both cases, they were trying to piece together

a puzzle without knowing what it was supposed to look like.

From SOS to OSS. In what would become a pattern, intelligence reform followed intelligence failure. Just as the Zimmerman Telegram led to MI-8, Dec. 7, 1941, led to redoubled efforts at code-breaking – by mid-1942, the Navy was intercepting some 60 percent of Tokyo’s naval communications – and to the creation of the Office of Strategic Services.

At the height of its power, the OSS fielded 13,000 intelligence agents. Working with their more seasoned British counterparts, OSS agents supported Allied operations in North Africa, developed target lists for the bombing campaigns in Europe and secretly brokered the surrender of Nazi forces in Italy. But the State Department and military branches blocked the upstart OSS from decoding Axis communications, thus stunting its capabilities.



What went wrong?

The underestimation that led to Sept. 11 and overestimation that led to Iraq came after more than a decade of serious intelligence problems.

- After the Gulf War of 1990-1991, the IC conceded it had underestimated Iraq's push for nuclear weapons by nine years.

- The IC failed to thwart a number of major attacks in the 1990s, from the first World Trade Center attack to the Khobar Towers and U.S. embassy bombings. When President Clinton retaliated with missile strikes on a purported chemical-weapons plant in Sudan in 1998, the IC came under criticism for shaky intelligence.

- In the late 1990s, intelligence assets tracked bin Laden and had him in their sights on several occasions, but disagreement among policymakers about whether to kill or capture him allowed him to escape.

- Before 9/11, the FBI and CIA were barred from sharing information about terror suspects. Likewise, key agencies wrangled over the use of armed Predator drones in Afghanistan.

- On 9/11, just 1 percent of the CIA's 18,000 employees was tasked to counter-terrorism.

Repeating Stimson's mistakes, President Truman shut down the OSS after the war and unwittingly continued the pattern. Yet two years later, he signed the National Security Act and created the Central Intelligence Agency to make sense of the vast amounts of intelligence landing on his desk.

After the surprise invasion of South Korea, which led to the secondary surprise of China's entry in the war, Truman formed a special committee to examine the nation's intelligence gaps. In the span of a year, he created the National Security Agency by executive fiat in part because America's nascent Intelligence Community (IC) needed a central node for monitoring and deciphering information from the Cold War's many fronts.

A decade later, in a bid to overthrow Fidel Castro, the CIA committed perhaps its greatest blunder. After delivering some 1,200 exiles to the Cuban coast, the CIA hoped to spark a counter-revolution with little risk or linkage to Washington. The ill-conceived operation "had all the disadvantages of involving America morally and politically," recalls historian Paul Johnson, "with none of the real advantages of U.S. air and naval participation." The CIA's exiles were decimated.

Yet the IC soon redeemed itself, mainly because President Kennedy gave it a chance to do so. Rather than retreating into a cocoon of commissions, he reminded America and the world that Castro and communism were the problem, not the CIA. And Kennedy remained doggedly committed to containing communism through intelligence activities. In fact, photoreconnaissance and signals intelligence intercepted by the NSA proved invaluable in uncovering a Kremlin plan to nuclearize Cuba a year after the Bay of Pigs.

But the pattern continued for the balance of the Cold War, with more perfect storms of poor policymaking and incomplete intelligence, more complacency, more ups, more downs.

In the wake of Vietnam, policymakers tore into the Intelligence Community with gusto, this time using reform as way to weaken rather than strengthen. The Church Commission, named after Idaho Sen. Frank Church, led the way by airing some of the IC's dirtiest little secrets – plots to kill foreign leaders, develop poisons, harass civil-rights leaders, use illegal wiretaps and build secret databases of U.S. citizens.

The commission ultimately made 100 recommendations, many aimed at limiting the IC's ability to monitor threats, conduct domestic surveillance and target foreign leaders. But if the commissioners' motives were good, the results were not. "Over in the Soviet bloc, we regarded it as a triumph," said Ion Mihai Pacepa, former chief of Romania's communist-era spy agency. He recalls how former Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu popped open a bottle of champagne after hearing about the Church report. The damage was even worse at home: after the Church Commission, as Derek Leebaert writes in "The Fifty-Year Wound," "The CIA would rarely be given the benefit of the doubt by increasingly skeptical Americans."

Yet the CIA proved resilient. In the early 1980s, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, CIA Director William Casey – an OSS veteran – told his deputies to "go out and kill me 10,000 Russians until they give up." Working with the mujahadeen, the CIA did that and then some. Indeed, it pays to recall that some of the greatest intelligence success stories are never known to the general public. Even so, the CIA was caught

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unawares as the Soviet empire collapsed a short time later.

Blame Game II. Intelligence will always be a mix of science and art, guesswork and facts, gut instinct and calculation. When humans interpret the motives and actions of other humans, we are bound to get it wrong sometimes, making stand-up policymaking and statesmen-like politics crucial.

After Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt focused on winning the war rather than winning political points. He created the OSS, poured resources into code-breaking and prodded America's embryonic IC to learn from Britain. Truman's example reminds us that mid-course corrections are sometimes necessary, even if it means giving critics fodder for political attacks. And JFK is instructive for what he didn't do, namely packing it in and concluding that the Cold War was no longer worth waging because of an intelligence mistake.

Thankfully, it's the policymakers in Congress and the White House – not intelligence analysts – who decide where to deploy the nation's resources and how to fight the nation's enemies. Given that intelligence agencies underestimated Saddam Hussein's nuclear program in 1991, it's no surprise that they extrapolated the worst in 2003. And if, as some observers have suggested, Saddam was pretending to have weapons of mass destruction as an internal deterrent, then it seems unfair for policymakers to blame the IC for reporting what its sources inside Iraq were saying. At the very least, it's disingenuous after a decade of budget cuts.

Moreover, after being criticized for not moving aggressively enough against Osama bin Laden, for not putting all the puzzle pieces together, it seems unfair to blame the IC for being aggressive



What went right?

Given the press accounts of the past 12 months, it would be easy to conclude that the IC can do nothing right. In reality:

- IC memos throughout the late 1990s warned of bin Laden's determination to attack America. A 1999 report predicted that terrorists could "crash-land an aircraft ... into the Pentagon ... CIA or the White House."
- The CIA disrupted planned attacks in eight different countries in 1999.
- In 2002, the CIA targeted and killed the Yemeni terrorists who planned the USS *Cole* attack. In 2003, the CIA penetrated deep enough into Saddam's inner circle to come within minutes of killing the dictator after a mole inside his security detail informed the CIA of his whereabouts.
- The ground war in Afghanistan was won largely by CIA agents and special forces, and as Tom McInerney and Paul Valley observe in "Endgame," "the integration of military special-operations forces and the clandestine services of the CIA was a marked success" in Iraq.
- Libya's decision to end its WMD program is a result of U.S. intelligence efforts. Also, it was the CIA that unearthed how Pakistani scientist A.Q. Khan shared nuclear secrets with North Korea, Libya and Iran.

in building the case against Saddam Hussein – a man who had the means and motives to attempt something worse than Sept. 11.

Of course, postwar intelligence may prove as malleable as prewar intelligence: officials at the U.S. National Geospatial Intelligence Agency have surmised that Iraq's WMDs may have been trucked to Syria. Last spring, sarin and mustard shells began springing up among conventional caches. And nine of Saddam's foremost WMD scientists have been killed in postwar Iraq. All had been interviewed by the coalition's WMD fact-finding group, as *The Weekly Standard* has reported.

Questions. The search for these weapons of mass confusion reminds us that intelligence is

much more complex than simply reading the enemy's mail, especially in an age of terror. In fact, it often yields more questions than answers.

Is it better for a president to act on imprecise intelligence and risk ridicule, or should he wait until the intelligence is undeniable and risk a U.S. city? Is it fair to expect the IC to think like the enemy? And can we fix the IC without first breaking this pattern – a pattern that begins with our own complacency, leads to poor policy execution and usually ends in embarrassment, if not disaster? 🍀

Alan W. Dowd is a senior fellow at Sagamore Institute for Policy Research.

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A Blueprint for the Green



Lt. Gen. Mark Curran explains how the Army's vision is shifting as a new century unfolds.



Lt. Gen. Mark Curran,
director, Futures Center,
U.S. Army.
James V. Carroll

For the U.S. Army, this is a time of particular challenge. While fully engaged in combat, peacekeeping and other operations in more than 120 countries, the Army is conducting its most comprehensive transformation in 50 years. Army leaders are re-examining and challenging organizational structures and institutions. They're picking the best of current capabilities and attributes while developing others that increase the Army's ability to respond to any and all threats. The end result of this transformation will be a more relevant and ready force – a campaign-quality army with joint and expeditionary capabilities.

To manage the transformation, Army Chief of Staff Peter Schoomaker turned to the Training and Doctrine Command. Charged with building the best force for the nation, TRADOC and its Futures Center integrates all transformation efforts, including those that focus on the Army's role in the joint force.

Lt. Gen. Mark Curran, the Futures Center's first director, spoke with *The American Legion Magazine* in his office at historic Fort Monroe in Hampton Roads, Va.

The American Legion Magazine:
How have the Afghanistan and Iraq wars changed the Army's mission?

Lt. Gen. Mark Curran: Our Army exists to fight and win our nation's wars, so in one sense our mission hasn't changed. The global war on terrorism, though, has changed the kind of war we must fight. We're adapting and preparing to meet our strategic commitments now *and* well into the future. We do not have the luxury to wait. So we're changing while still fighting – and that's definitely not business as usual.

Remember, the environment during the Cold War was almost predictable. We had a definable enemy: the Soviet Union. Our main job was deterrence. We built a very robust and heavy force to deal with that threat. Once the Berlin Wall came down and the Soviet Union collapsed, our focus shifted. We became an army with the ability to deploy anywhere in the world, conducting various peace-making or peacekeeping missions. Yet during that time the Army was reduced in size by 38 percent.

After the Cold War it became clear, and Sept. 11 confirmed, that we were in an increasingly unstable world. We now deal with terrorists, regional instability and weapons of mass destruction, all the while keeping a wary eye on some strategic threats that have not disappeared with our Cold War enemies. Our deployments have been largely unpredictable, and they go on for longer periods. We've seen an increased need for smaller, more agile units – not of divisional size, but a brigade size with more capabilities.

Q: *What lessons have the Army learned from those conflicts?*

A: As a learning organization, the Army is examining Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom for insights to be applied to the current force and implications for the future force. We recently released a book, "On Point," which tells the story of the Army's role in OIF in the context of the joint fight. The book provides insights on how the Army trains, equips and fights in major combat operations. The Army has already taken action on some of the emerging implications. Many lessons have been learned at the tactical level where the sergeants, lieutenants and captains live, work and fight. And here at TRADOC we're transforming the Army education system to quickly integrate those lessons at every level.

Recently a company commander in the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) talked about some lessons learned when his com-

pany survived an enemy attack that left his platoon sergeant seriously wounded. They counter-attacked the enemy, killing one and detaining two. He attributed his unit's success to rehearsals, after-action reviews and aggressive leadership at every level.

Q: *What does transformation mean, and is it good for the Army?*

A: Transformation is what we call the process that shapes the changing nature of the Army. We're doing this through new combinations of concepts, capabilities, people and organizations. The Army is pursuing the most compre-

hensive transformation of its forces since the early years of World War II. Not only is it good for the Army, it's also essential for the entire joint force and the nation.

Obviously we have to be able to respond to the new threats we face today, but transformation is more than that. We're building the Army's future force. It's a campaign-quality land force with joint and expeditionary capabilities. Transformation will create a campaign-capable Army this decade. It will require the deep and personal commitment of every member of the Army team – every leader, soldier, civilian, family member and, yes, the support of our veterans.

Gen. Schoomaker, the chief of staff of the Army, has given us a tough mission, insisting we employ a transformation methodology that first and foremost enables soldiers today. It has to increase the speed at which we compile, assess and incorporate the hard lessons learned by soldiers and leaders. Finally, it must integrate change in a manner that enhances combat effectiveness and readiness and safeguards our soldiers' advantage in the future.

Gen. Schoomaker has several focus areas he wants us to concentrate on in our transformation efforts. They run the gamut from basic soldier issues – improved lethality, survivability, communications, etc. – through complicated global networking and joint logistics issues. We also have focus areas that are looking at ways to stabilize the force to improve unit readiness and the lifestyle of our soldiers and their families. We're looking at several key areas in the Army Education



System that will impact both leaders and soldiers, not the least of which is to instill the warrior ethos for all soldiers, regardless of their specialty or position. If nothing else, this war has shown us there is no frontline or rear area; everyone in the theater must be prepared mentally and physically for close combat.

Work prioritizing and identifying the resources to realize the potential from the focus areas has come together as the Army Campaign Plan – the Army’s blueprint for the future. It lays out the intent, vision, lines of operation, objectives and decision points that will enable us to do this over the next six years. Our business at the Futures Center is to act as the hub of Army innovation and to work with industry to speed the development of new technologies and capabilities. We also develop warfighting concepts and conduct experimentation, often with our joint partners: the Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard.

Q: Can you describe some of the changes that are occurring?

A: We have to be more agile, with the ability to deploy quickly. Gen. Schoomaker’s intent is to create a modular, brigade-based Army that is more responsive to regional combatant commanders’ needs. Modular does not mean smaller. It means units that quickly deploy lethal, self-contained, tailored packages that can fight upon arrival. We’re creating units that are designed and trained to fit into any combination of joint forces. For example, an Army combat brigade working comfortably in a Marine-led operation. In a little over two years we’ll add 10 brigade combat teams. We may add a total of 15 by fiscal year 2007. We’ve already begun implementing these changes in the

3rd Infantry Division, the force that fought so brilliantly in Operation Iraqi Freedom and is preparing to go back to Iraq again. Soon the 10th Mountain and 101st Airborne (Air Assault) Divisions will also move to the new designs.

At the same time we will reorganize and standardize the National Guard brigade combat teams and standardize unit design in our Reserve component. We have to be able to easily integrate our Reserve component and our

“We have to be more agile, with the ability to deploy quickly.”

units have to be interchangeable. And we have to change the way we do personnel replacements so that we keep units together

longer. This reduces the amount of redundant training we do. It helps us get better by creating the conditions for units to become much more cohesive and train more aggressively – not necessarily longer, but certainly smarter.

Q: Is your plan to continue to use the Guard and Reserve as part of the rotation of Army units in Iraq and Afghanistan?

A: The short answer is yes. There is no way I can overstate the magnificent contribution of the members of the Army’s reserve components in this time of war. From securing the homeland to engaging in close-action combat, they have been superb. There has been a very high demand for certain kinds of units – military police and civil affairs, for instance – and as a result we need to look hard at the mix of military specialties we have in both the active and reserve components. We are internally rebalancing both the active and Reserve component forces.

At the end of the day, the Reserve components will continue to provide combat, combat support and combat-service support formations to support the

global war on terrorism. As an “Army of One,” all components are integrally involved in the current campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan and are also involved totally with the redesign planning and decision-making processes regarding this rebalancing effort.

Q: The Army has done some amazing things since deploying to Afghanistan and Iraq following the Sept. 11 attacks. What is the Army’s biggest achievement during that time?

A: I guess you’d have to say securing the homeland and fighting two wars in Iraq and Afghanistan while simultaneously conducting the biggest transformation in the Army’s history. And we’ve done all this because of the accomplishments of our soldiers as they answered the nation’s call. They have deployed, fought, bled and many have died. They’re staying on to help build democratic institutions in both Afghanistan and Iraq and in other locales around the world. *TIME* made the soldier its Person of the Year. Your Army is performing magnificently. Our soldiers are world-class; they fight valiantly and demonstrate a true warrior spirit. But they also have in their hearts a very compassionate spirit, and we see that demonstrated all around the world on playgrounds in Iraq, in hospitals and orphanages in Afghanistan, and in small villages in Africa.

Q: The Army has also had some significant challenges. What do you consider the toughest?

A: We do face some tough challenges. We are deployed in about 120 countries around the world. Our operational tempo is as high as it’s ever been. Old rules no longer apply. The global war on terrorism requires us to challenge old paradigms, to be flexible and adaptable to face a cunning and devious enemy. As we win this



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war, we must also prevail in the peace that follows. And here is one of our biggest challenges: we need to tell the success story of our Army and its great soldiers more clearly and more often. You hear a lot of talk about technology and advanced weapons systems, but we know that at the heart of every mission and everything we do is the soldier. Much of what they're doing gets no recognition, no medal and no picture in the paper. But they do it because it's the right thing to do in keeping with their sense of duty.

Q: *How can we, The American Legion with its 2.7 million members, help the Army move forward?*

A: Spread the word to others about all of these positive changes in our Army. Help keep the Army's story in front of the American people. Tell a soldier you see in the airport that you appreciate what he or she is doing and that you stand behind them all the way. Just keep doing what you have been doing for so many years. Your organization's commitment to supporting our soldiers and their families reflects your patriotism and understanding

of the Army's tough mission today ... making significant changes while fighting a war. We do not move forward alone, but as part of the Joint Team. We need the support of the American people and the U.S. Congress. With your backing, we will continue to carry the fight to our enemies to provide security here at home. 🇺🇸

Interview: Mark Brzozowski is a retired colonel of field artillery and a TRADOC consultant.

Article design: King Doxsee

Pentagon to Main Street

Military-inspired breakthroughs enhance civilian quality of life.

Top-secret military technology that once took years to trickle down from the Pentagon to Main Street is now as likely to find its way to retail shelves at the Mall of America as soon or sooner than U.S. troops can unpack their versions on the streets of Baghdad.

The military's rapidly expanding appetite for smaller, smarter, faster and more sophisticated battlefield tools is tearing down traditional walls between military and civilian research and development. Partnerships between Wall Street and the Pentagon not only accelerate dual-purpose technology, they narrow the time frame between battlefield and shopping center.

Remote satellite sensing is a prime example. Military spy satellites are invaluable tools for generals in crafting strategic and tactical battlefield plans. The same technology enables civilian weather forecasters to track dangerous atmospheric systems such as hurricanes, tornadoes and severe storms. The Global Positioning System is a synergistic technology that helps prevent friendly-fire accidents in the world's hotspots. And with the help of GPS, civilian emergency personnel are more likely to locate skiers buried under avalanches or injured hikers on remote mountain trails. GPS not only guides military Humvees through hostile territory, it guides civilian H2 drivers through the streets of Boston to the nearest all-night pharmacy.

Night-vision devices, range finders and portable wireless communications networks are other common examples of technologies launched in the military now used by the public. Navy hybrid radar used to detect submarines now holds promise as a breakthrough method to detect tumors.

Other military-inspired technology, such as supersonic flight, awaits mainstream acceptance, its cost too expensive for consumers. Boeing's SST project never got off the ground, and the last of the 16 French-British Concorde passenger crafts were mothballed.

Military devices are often initially bulkier, beefed-up and more advanced renditions of their civilian counterparts. But they sometimes have trouble keeping up with market-driven technology. Take Personal Digital Assistants as an example. The current military PDA, or D-DACT, possesses far greater sophistication than its current civilian cousin, but the military does not plan to replace its D-DACT before 2007. By that time, civilian PDAs may be generations ahead in capabilities.

Regardless of the efficacy of military-to-civilian spin-offs, research and development partnerships between private industry and the Pentagon are likely to remain the model for the foreseeable future. It's a symbiotic relationship driven by expediency that pushes technological breakthroughs for the military and the marketplace alike.

— James V. Carroll

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How can someone • who lives in insane luxury be a star in today's world?

Editor's note: For many years, actor and political commentator Ben Stein wrote a biweekly column online for Eonline.com called "Monday Night At Morton's." Stein recently ended the column, named for an upscale restaurant. Below is the final installment.

BY BEN STEIN

As I begin to write this, I slug it, as we writers say, which means I put a heading on top of the document to identify it. This heading is "eonlineFINAL," and it gives me a shiver to write it. I have been doing this column for so long that I cannot even recall when I started. I loved writing this column so much for so long I came to believe it would never end. It worked well for a long time, but gradually, my changing as a person and the world's change have overtaken it.

On a small scale, Morton's,

while better than ever, no longer attracts as many stars as it used to. It still brings in the rich people in droves and definitely some stars. I saw Samuel L. Jackson there a few days ago, and we had a nice visit, and right before that, I saw and had a splendid talk with Warren Beatty in an elevator, in which we agreed that "Splendor in the Grass" was a super movie. But Morton's is not the star galaxy it once was, though it probably will be again.

Beyond that, a bigger change has happened. I no longer think Hollywood stars are terribly important. They are uniformly pleasant, friendly people, and they treat me better than I deserve to be treated. But a man or woman who makes a huge wage for memorizing lines and reciting them in front of a camera is no longer

my idea of a shining star we should all look up to.

How can a man or woman who makes an eight-figure wage and lives in insane luxury really be a star in today's world, if by a star we mean someone bright and powerful and attractive as a role model? Real stars are not riding around in the backs of limousines or in Porsches or getting trained in yoga or Pilates and eating only raw fruit while they have Vietnamese girls do their nails. They can be interesting, nice people, but they are not heroes to me any longer.

A real star is the soldier of the 4th Infantry Division who poked his head into a hole on a farm near Tikrit, Iraq. He could have been met by a bomb or a hail of AK-47 bullets. Instead, he faced an abject Saddam Hussein and the gratitude of all of the decent people of the world. A real star is the U.S. soldier who was sent to disarm a bomb next to a road north of Baghdad. He approached it, and the bomb went off and killed him. A real star, the kind who haunts my memory night and day, is the U.S. soldier in Baghdad who saw a little girl playing with a piece of unexploded ordnance



Actor and author Ben Stein. **AP**

on a street near where he was guarding a station. He pushed her aside and threw himself on it just as it exploded. He left a family desolate in California and a little girl alive in Baghdad.

The stars who deserve media attention are not the ones who have lavish weddings on TV but the ones who patrol the streets of Mosul even after two of their buddies were murdered and their bodies battered and stripped for the sin of trying to protect Iraqis from terrorists. We put couples with incomes of \$100 million a year on the covers of our magazines. The noncoms and officers who barely scrape by on military pay but stand on guard in Afghanistan and Iraq and on ships and in submarines and near the Arctic Circle are anonymous as they live and die.

I am no longer comfortable being a part of the system that has such poor values, and I do not want to perpetuate those values by pretending that who is eating at Morton's is a big subject. There are plenty of other stars in the American firmament: the policemen and women who go off on patrol in South Central and have no idea if they will return alive; the orderlies and paramedics who bring in people who have been in terrible accidents and prepare them for surgery; the teachers and nurses who throw their whole spirits into caring for autistic children; and the kind men and women who work in hospices and in cancer wards. Think of each and every fireman who was running up the stairs at the World Trade Center as the towers began to collapse.

Now you have my idea of a real hero. We are not responsible for the operation of the universe, and what happens to us is not terribly important. God is real, not a fiction, and when we turn over our lives to Him, He takes far

better care of us than we could ever do for ourselves. In a word, we make ourselves sane when we fire ourselves as the directors of the movie of our lives and turn the power over to Him. I came to realize that life lived to help others is the only one that matters. This is my highest and best use as a human.

I can put it another way. Years ago, I realized I could never be as great an actor as Olivier or as good a comic as Steve Martin – or Martin Mull, or Fred Willard – or as good an economist as Samuelson or Friedman or as good a writer as Fitzgerald. Or even remotely close to any of them. But I could be a devoted father to my son, husband to my wife and, above all, a good son to the parents who had done so much for me. This came to be my main task

in life. I did it moderately well with my son, pretty well with my wife and well indeed with my parents (with my sister's help). I cared for and paid attention to them in their declining years. I stayed with my father as he got sick, went into extremis and then into a coma and then entered immortality with my sister and me reading him the Psalms.

This was the only point at which my life touched the lives of the soldiers in Iraq or the firefighters in New York. I came to realize that life lived to help others is the only one that matters and that it is my duty, in return for the lavish life God has devolved upon me, to help others He has placed in my path. This is my highest and best use as a human. 🌿

Article design: Doug Rollison



Army Staff Sgt. Chris Golde befriends a Kurdish child during a dismounted patrol within a displaced Kurdish camp in northwest Kirkuk. **DoD**

Back from Baghdad

*War correspondent Karl Zinsmeister
defends Saddam's removal.*





Karl Zinsmeister is more than editor-in-chief of *The American Enterprise*, a national magazine of politics, business and culture that gets its name from its parent think tank, the Washington-based American Enterprise Institute. He is a throw-back to the early days of journalism, when news was the focus – rather than the newsmen – when reporters worried more about the story than their image, when war correspondents understood that telling the whole story meant reporting good news as well as bad.

The Syracuse, N.Y., native has reported plenty of both in a pair of pivotal books on the Iraq war and postwar Iraq: “Boots on the Ground” and “Dawn over Baghdad.” Together, the books chronicle the rapid overthrow of Saddam Hussein’s regime and arduous reconstruction effort now under way. They have earned acclaim from such diverse sources as the Military Book Club, *The Financial Times* and *National Review*. PBS has invited Zinsmeister to translate the books into a documentary film.

The books serve as something of a bridge between Iraq and the American people – and a stiff dose of fact for Zinsmeister’s cynical Beltway peers. That’s because these initial drafts of

history are firsthand accounts. As an embedded reporter with the 82nd Airborne in 2003, Zinsmeister lived the lightning invasion that swept aside Saddam’s murder machine in three weeks. He then did what few reporters had the stomach or integrity to do: re-embedded during America’s simultaneous counterinsurgency and nation-building operations in 2004. When *The American Legion Magazine* interviewed Zinsmeister, he was preparing for yet another tour inside Iraq.

The American Legion Magazine:
How has the embedding experience changed the U.S. military and the press?

Karl Zinsmeister:
I really don’t think it changed the military much. The military was already way ahead of the rest of the country in terms of its willingness to let us stare over its collective shoulder. I observe and report on all kinds of people and organizations – cities, government agencies, corporations – and none

of the places I’ve studied has been as open as the military. The military has nothing to hide. They are confident about themselves,

and it shows. I saw few adjustments made by the military to accommodate this invasion of reporters. They allowed us to see them as they were.

As to the press, I saw a lot of people who wasted their entire embedding experience. I moved from unit to unit and got in with the infantry. I didn’t expect to be babysat; I wasn’t looking for an escort. Others were. Some say the media was hypnotized by the access and led around by the nose. Nonsense. The military didn’t even know where I was and didn’t have any control over what I was seeing or doing – or what I was going to write. And those

ground rules applied to every embed.



Zinsmeister’s work includes the good and the bad news from Iraq. *Courtesy Karl Zinsmeister*

Q: You write about the hardships caused by the WMD threat. In light of the Senate Intelligence Committee’s report on shoddy prewar WMD intelligence, what are your thoughts on Iraq’s chemical and biological weapons programs?

A: In my view, it really isn’t that relevant whether or not Saddam had

active WMD programs immediately before the invasion took place. We had to assume he had them or could quickly reconstitute

Fighting rages around U.S. soldiers outside a Baghdad building where they found a stash of rocket-propelled grenades. *Courtesy Karl Zinsmeister*

them. This is a man who used WMDs on 42 different occasions, and he had the motivation and personality to use them again. As long as he was in power, WMDs could pop up again on very short notice in his inventory or in the hands of someone he might choose to give them to. The scientists were still there, the labs were still there, the knowledge was still there, the factories that made the WMD shells were still there, and the markets were still there. In the post-9/11 environment, it no longer makes sense to risk that. It only makes sense to err on the side of safety. Saddam Hussein was a human WMD, and removing him was the only prudent course of action.

Q: In *"Boots on the Ground,"* you detail the connection U.S. troops make between Sept. 11, Iraq and the wider war on terror. How did Baathist Iraq fit into the web of terror? And why was it important to face this threat?

A: Most of the soldiers I was with would say that the real monster behind 9/11 was actually not Osama bin Laden. The deeper problem, the real root of the problem, is the incredibly incompetent and cruel governments that prevail throughout the Middle East and produce only one thing in bumper-crop quantities: homicidally frustrated young men. There are 22 Arab nations and zero democracies. Iraq will be the first. Until we fix this democracy deficit, we're not going to be able to win the war on terror. We can't do it with police on our borders or metal detectors at airports. To choke off that supply of angry young men, we have to overturn these dreadful governments in the Middle East.

Iraq was the right place to start because: A. There was no tyrant crueler in that region than Saddam Hussein. B. Iraq had a greater

Karl Zinsmeister

- 1959** Born in Syracuse, N.Y.
- 1981** Graduated from Yale University
- 1981** Legislative assistant to Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan
- 1985** Syndicated radio host, "Trend Watch"
- 1986** Research director, The Working Seminar on Family and American Welfare Policy
- 1988** Appointed by Education Secretary William Bennett to the board of advisers of the National Fund for the Improvement and Reform of Schools and Teaching
- 1994** Named editor in chief, *The American Enterprise*
- 2000** Syndicated columnist, United Media Syndicate
- 2003** Embedded reporter, Operation Iraqi Freedom; published *"Boots on the Ground"*
- 2004** Embedded reporter, central Iraq; published *"Dawn Over Baghdad"*

ability to hurt its neighbors and America than others in the region. C. It had a history of attacking its neighbors and U.S. interests. And, D. Iraq has a better upside.

Iraq is not like Afghanistan or Saudi Arabia. Those places are medieval, pre-modern cultures. Iraq has a history, pre-Saddam, of learning and an openness to modernity. I have met Iraqi engineers and physicians and literature professors who are anxious to grab the reigns of a different society and make it a pioneering country for the region.

Q: How has Iraq changed between your tours?

A: The Iraqi economy is going to grow by 60 percent by the end of 2004. Something on the order of a million cars have been imported. Cell-phone ownership is over a million. The amount of electricity is higher than before the war.

So people ask, "Why do we hear about blackouts?" Because the Iraqi economy is blooming and demanding more energy. Iraqis are buying washing machines and TVs and satellite receivers. And all of these devices are absorbing electricity. Demand is going up faster than supply. Plus, in the Saddam era, 57 percent of electricity went to Baghdad. Now electricity is being distributed on a per-capita basis, so Baghdad gets 28 percent. That means privileged neighborhoods in Baghdad are getting less juice than they're used to, and they are upset, but most of the country is getting more electrical power than ever before.

All of this progress comes courtesy of the U.S. military, which is doing two things: fighting a tough guerrilla war while simultaneously reconstructing a country. It's important to understand that historically this has never been done. And it's important to understand that the only people really helping the Iraqis are our troops and coalition partners. The U.N. is virtually AWOL because they say it's a dangerous place. But Liberia is a dangerous place. Rwanda is a dangerous place. Yet the U.N. is in those places. Politics is keeping the U.N. out of Iraq.

Q: You visited the now-infamous Abu Ghraib prison while writing *"Dawn Over Baghdad."* How have the troops on the ground reacted to the prisoner-mistreatment scandal? Could you discuss the fallout inside Iraq and within U.S. journalism?

A: Abu Ghraib was a disaster. I was heartbroken when I heard about it because I knew this was going to become the brush that tarred all of our soldiers. Our troops are the first ones who want these morons punished and put in jail. However, it was so grossly overblown, from a media standpoint, that it could become a textbook case of how to take a

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true but unrepresentative incident and turn it into a false paradigm.

A quarter-million Americans have rotated through Iraq since the invasion. Take any city that size and there are going to be a substantial number of knuckleheads. The percentage of people like those who committed the crimes at Abu Ghraib is remarkably small, and the lack of perspective is frustrating. After all, there have been scores of Iraqi detainees killed, but not by Americans – by terrorists. A couple times a week, terrorists lob mortars into Abu Ghraib and kill their fellow Iraqis. An attack in April killed 22 detainees and injured 91 others. But it gets no reporting. Instead we hear that detainees were humiliated and scared and had dogs barking at them. All of that's out of bounds – but it wasn't killing or maiming. Yet the people who represent humanitarian concerns are only appalled by what the Americans did. They don't say anything about the insurgency. They don't even acknowledge that it is happening. That's not an excuse for what our guards did. They will go to jail for it. But there's a deeper, much grosser atrocity taking place, and if you want to be an atrocity hunter, then why not pinpoint the real atrocity?

Abu Ghraib was a bigger story inside the Beltway than inside Baghdad. Iraqis have seen atrocities, and they understand the difference between what those U.S. guards did and real atrocities.

Q: You describe Operation Iraqi Freedom as the “gentlest war in history” and detail the great care U.S. forces took to protect innocents. In light of what has happened in places like Fallujah, was the war too gentle? Were the rules of engagement too careful, too constraining?

A: Iraq's a big country with a lot of different kinds of people. About three-quarters of the country is



Iraqi children enthusiastically greet U.S. soldiers visiting their farm. An older relative may have felt differently; the road in front of their home is pocked by three bomb craters. *Courtesy Karl Zinsmeister*

thrilled to have Saddam gone. In those areas it would have been inappropriate to be more aggressive – in fact, one of the reasons public opinion has stuck with us through the travails is because 75 percent of Iraqis recognize that Americans are not arbitrary or indiscriminate in using force. In the other quarter of the country, I think the guerrilla war would have happened regardless. There are some parts of Iraq that will not be peaceful until a few thousand people are killed or locked up.

Troops often chafe under rules of engagement. But I've heard relatively few complaints. Quite often, it wasn't rules of engagement that constrained them, but the inherent decency of our troops that caused them to fight the way they did. I was staggered by their restraint. They wouldn't return fire because there were women around or a mosque nearby. And in many cases the rules of engagement would have allowed them to fire. They fight as Americans, as citizen soldiers who have good hearts.

Q: You conclude that rebuilding Iraq and defending civilization is an “almighty strain on the soldiers

bearing the burden.” Is it too much of a burden?

A: We're asking a lot of these young men, but it's not for me to decide if this is too great a burden. It's for them to decide, and they have decided. Re-enlistment rates are exceeding the targets, and that's the best refutation of the claim that the troops are unhappy or upset. Morale amongst our troops in Iraq surprises me every time I go over there. Sure, they miss their families and are tired of the heat and of seeing the ugly side of human nature. But they have never given the impression that they feel taken advantage of, that this is a waste of their time, that this is an unworthy cause.

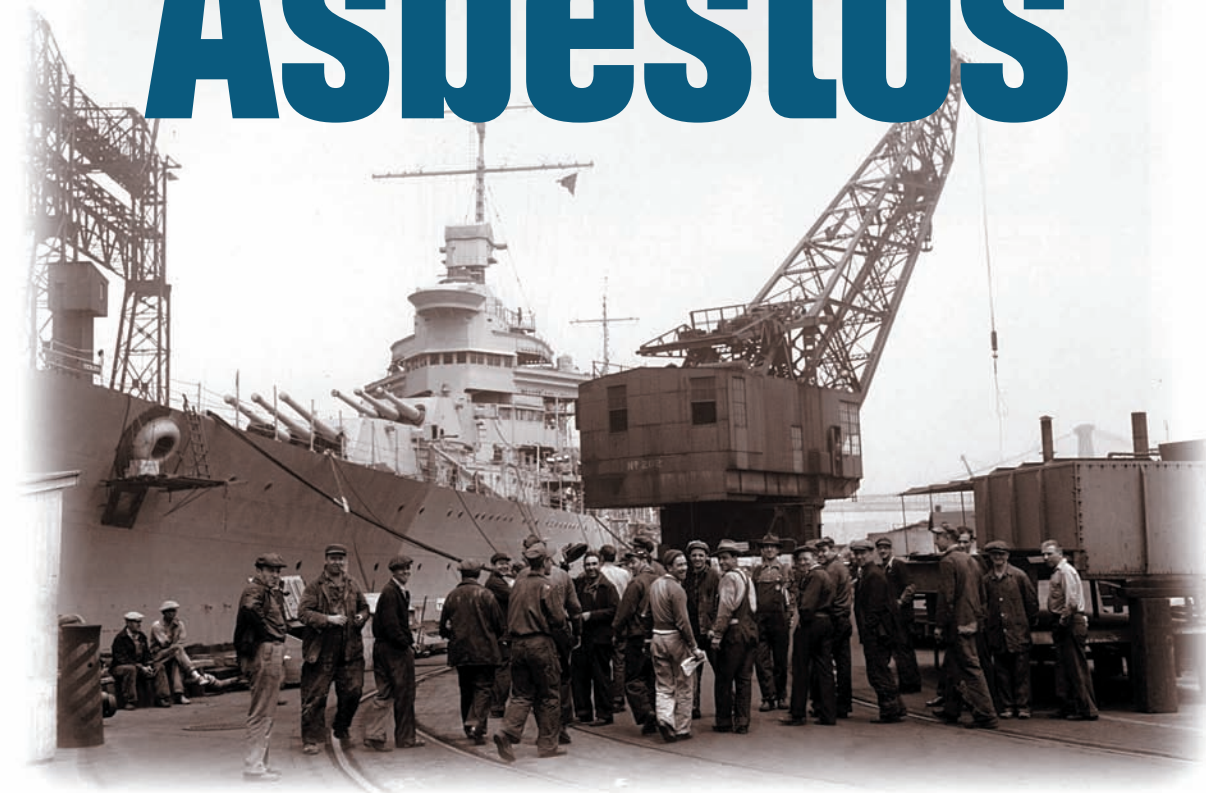
Most of them tell me that they feel this is the most important thing they will ever do. They know this is a historical turning point for our nation. The main worry I hear from the troops is that our country will back off before the job is done. They know that as long as we don't lose our nerve here at home, we are going to have a successful result in Iraq. 🌿

Interview: Alan W. Dowd

Article design: Doug Rollison

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Meaningful Moments





In a national convention of presidential candidates, generals and cabinet secretaries, Legionnaires learned who matters most to Commander John Brieden: our troops.

BY STEVE BROOKS

Since last September, American Legion National Commander John Brieden has visited all 50 states. He traveled to locations as diverse as the Philippines, Germany and South Korea. He met with national and international dignitaries and with the president of the United States.

But at the Legion's 86th National Convention in Nashville, Tenn., Brieden told Legionnaires not one of those visits was more meaningful than the time he spent with servicemembers who returned home wounded from war.

"During my travels, my visits with our troops have been special," Brieden told a packed Delta Ballroom in the Gaylord Opryland Hotel. "The most defining moments for me have been visiting those soldiers coming back wounded. These young people are absolutely amazing. I'm so impressed with the way they handle themselves." Brieden's comments highlighted a convention that included speeches by President George W. Bush and Democratic challenger Sen. John Kerry, appearances by VA Secretary Anthony J. Principi and

Commander John Brieden addresses the 86th National Convention. *Tom Strattman*

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge, along with the election of new National Commander Thomas P. Cadmus of Michigan. More than 10,000 Legionnaires attended the convention from Aug. 31 to Sept. 2.

Dozens of issues were addressed during the convention, but the underlying theme was troop support. Brieden spoke of injured servicemembers who desperately want to return to their units and their comrades. He told the story of a soldier recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington. The man was heading into surgery to have an infected leg amputated and had no family by his side. When Brieden asked why, the man replied that he had sent his family back home to Fort Stewart, Ga.

"He had family all alone back at Fort Stewart," Brieden said. "I said that we needed to get someone there. The next morning, (Department of



Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Briscoe of Ames, Texas, is honored during the convention. Briscoe, of the 5th Special Forces, lost his right arm to a rocket-propelled grenade attack in Iraq. **Tom Strattman**

Georgia Adjutant) Charlie Knox called me and said, 'Last night we had people over at their house.' He told me they'd take

care of them.

"Our biggest job today is support for our troops. We've worked for increased benefits for members of the National Guard and the Reserves to make sure we take care of them and their families. And we need to make absolutely sure the GI Bill of Rights includes National Guardsmen and Reserves. We need to make sure those returning have a VA to return to. We need to make sure we have a VA properly funded. That's why we're for mandatory funding."

Brieden said the Legion will continue the fight to end the disabled veterans tax, which offsets pensions of disabled military retirees with their disability compensation. Last fall, Congress approved legislation phasing in concurrent receipt for just a few veterans over the next 10 years, leaving thousands of others shortchanged.

"We've been working for a long time on concurrent receipt, or the disabled veterans tax," Brieden

The following are summaries of more than 200 resolutions passed at the 86th National Convention of The American Legion in Nashville, Tenn. Subject titles of the resolutions are in italics. For the full text, contact the Legion Library at (317) 630-1366, e-mail library@legion.org or visit the Web site at Legion.org. Send a written request for a booklet of all approved resolutions to The Library, The American Legion, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.

AMERICANISM

Joseph E. Caouette Jr. (NH), Chairman

406 Urges president and Congress to effectively fund and staff positions to provide for *Internal Security of the United States* and to deny individuals or groups the ability to infiltrate and destroy the U.S. government.

407 *English be Declared as Official U.S. Language.*

408 *Return Patriotic Holidays to Traditional Dates.*

409 *English be Used in Naturalization Ceremonies.*

410 Urges denying benefits to *Illegal Aliens*, support penalties for employers who knowingly hire illegal aliens, and call for security of U.S. borders.

411 Alert elected officials and public of massive influx of illegal immigrants and the consequences of mass immigration. Calls for *Immigration Reform*.

412 Amend the law to allow *Injured or Disabled Non-citizen Veterans Applying for Naturalization* to receive naturalization with less than three years active-duty service if injured in the U.S. Armed Forces and honorably discharged.

413 Amend Constitution to allow public *School Prayer*.

414 Supports *Constitutional Amendment to Protect the Flag of the United States*.

415 Seeks legislation to *Oppose Foreign Manufacture of American Flags*.

Legion honors Parton with 'Good Guy' award

When The American Legion presented Dolly Parton with its annual James V. Day "Good Guy" Award, she said the real honor was meeting the Legionnaires honoring her.

Parton couldn't hide her appreciation and admiration for the Legion during the award's presentation Aug. 30 at the Past Department Commanders Club Luncheon.

"It's a great honor to be here in the company of you folks," Parton said. "What I do is very small compared to what you have done and what you continue to do. I can't think of anything I'd rather be doing than accepting this award."

The James V. Day "Good Guy" Award honors the spirit of giving to community and nation. Parton said patriotism is alive and well in America, and the Legion is proof of that.

"I'm not a bit political, but I am patriotic," she said. "When you meet people like this, you put all politics aside and think about what America is and what makes it so great. These (Legionnaires) are great people. We live in a great country in America, and I am very happy to be a part of that."

In addition to being a country music legend, Parton founded Dollywood Enterprises, which provides millions

of dollars in her home county of Sevier, Tenn., as well as nationwide, for children's educational programs. Her Imagination Library program, now operating in

255 communities in 34 states, provides a book a month from birth until age 5 for all children in participating communities.

For Parton's efforts in raising awareness for the needs of rural people in her home county, Fort Sanders Sevier Medical Center named its family birthing unit after her. The unit offers state-of-the-art equipment in a pleasant and comfortable environment, close to home.

"Dolly Parton's contributions to improving lives, from the hills of Tennessee to countless cities and towns all across America, exemplify the spirit of the James V. Day 'Good Guy' Award," PDCC president Tom Bock said. "It is an honor to recognize her for her many contributions to strengthening the American way of life."

"I don't know if I'm a good guy, but I try to be," said Parton, who plans to display the award plaque in her Dollywood museum. "I

thank you for keeping America safe and being what you are. I appreciate this more than I can say."

— Steve Brooks



Entertainment legend Dolly Parton accepts the James V. Day "Good Guy" Award for her contributions to community and nation.

James V. Carroll

416 Opposes legislation allowing *Conscientious Objectors Tax Diversion* from military spending.

417 Oppose *Changes to Title V of the Immigration and Nationality Act*. Title V allows secret evidence to be used to identify terrorists and those linked to terrorists.

418 *Illegal Immigration Compromises National Security*. Apprehend and incarcerate illegal immigrants.

419 Oppose *Amnesty for Illegal Immigrants*.

420 Oppose *Financial Aid for Illegal Alien Students*.

421 Reform of the *Student Visa System*.

422 Supports adoption of an *Immigration Policy for the 21st Century* that will eliminate social, economic and population problems caused by illegal immigration.

423 Amend the "Temporary Protected Status" Portion of the *Immigration Act of 1990* to limit coverage to residents legally in the United States.

424 Supports providing federal agencies with resources for *Tracking Arrival and Departure of Foreign Visitors to the United States*.

425 Support *Fairness for Immigrant Spouses* by waiving two-year eligibility restrictions to widows and widowers of those killed in the U.S. military and waive fees for posthumous citizenship awarded to U.S. servicemembers killed in combat.

426 Reform of the *Non-Immigrant Visa Program*. Arrest and deport those who commit visa fraud and limit categories for visa issuance.

427 Protect *College Students Activated for Guard/ Reserve Duty* by granting leave of absence without loss of college credits, scholarships or tuition.

428 Supports *Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance*. Opposes dilution or elimination of phrases.

429 Supports *Armed Forces Day*.

430 Award *Medal of Honor to the Four Chaplains*.

said. "It was like beating our heads up against the wall. We took a big step this year. It wasn't what we wanted, but the government never wanted to say a person could draw both (payments). They have now. We will continue to work on this."

Brieden said the Legion has much to be proud of and was quick to thank those responsible. "We asked for a World War II Dedication Day in every community; you grabbed it and you ran with it. There were 7,000 to 8,000 communities that held Dedication Day ceremonies. You recognized World War II veterans and thanked them for their service."

"You should be proud of what we accomplished. The 2.7 million members of The American Legion have made a difference this year. It's been an honor and a privilege to serve as your national commander, but the guy who puts on the red hat isn't the one who gets it done. It's the ones who put on the blue caps across the country."



President George W. Bush assured Legionnaires that, on his watch, America will not show uncertainty or weakness. *Tom Stratman*

A Two-Day Debate. President Bush and Sen. Kerry spoke before standing-room-only crowds at the convention. On Tuesday, Legion family members lined up outside

the Delta Ballroom more than three hours before Bush was scheduled to speak. Much of what the Republican incumbent said struck a chord with the audience.

"We meet today at a time of war for our country – a war we did not start, yet one that we will win," Bush said to the roar of the crowd. "If America shows weakness or uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch."

"The world changed on that terrible September morning, and since that day, we have changed the world. Before Sept. 11, 2001, Afghanistan served as the home base of al-Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terror cells around the world, including our own country. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. I don't know

whether you know this or not, but over 10 million Afghan citizens have registered to vote in the October presidential elections. Because we acted, many young

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Elmer Fuhrhop (OH), Chairman

389 Provide equal treatment in *Admission of Children of U.S. Citizens* regardless of country of origin.

390 Federal and state governments should provide financial assistance to treat *Catastrophic Illness Among Children*.

391 Opposes use of *Children in Pornographic Literature*.

392 Supports *Comprehensive Health Care for Children and Youth*.

393 Adequately fund programs to stop *Drug Trafficking*.

394 Establish *National Family Week*.

395 Opposes weakening of penalties for *Production, Sale and Distribution of Obscene Literature*.

396 Protect Children from the *Unrestricted Media*.

397 Reaffirming *Immunization Program* for children.

398 Supports funding *School Nutrition Program*.

399 Support for the *Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention*.

400 Reduce *Violence and Vandalism in the Schools*.

401 Policy Statement on Family supports preserving marriage as between a man and woman through federal legislation or constitutional amendment.

ECONOMICS

Kenneth Sercherchi (ME), Chairman

31 Provide Payment of Death Benefit if *Montgomery GI Bill Is Not Used*.

35 Support Legislation for *Activated Reservists* including income insurance and tax credits.

36 Urges changing tax code so veterans and families serving after 1976 can participate in *Qualified Veterans Mortgage Bonds* programs.

40 Add *Active Reservists to Those Eligible for Certain Job Training Service*.

'Reconnect' works

Legion's Recruiter of the Year sets membership standard.

Legionnaire Nathaniel King knows a thing or two about recruiting, and he has the credentials to prove it.

In the past three years, King has never finished below third in the National Recruiter of the Year competition. He placed third in 2002, second last year and, in Nashville, was honored with this year's first-place award. Since 2001, he has brought 842 new members into The American Legion, and this year, by the time the convention began, he'd already recruited 100 more.

King's success is shared with Post 267 in Columbus, Ga., home of 26 Gold Brigaders, the award given to Legionnaires recruiting 50 or more new members. The 2003 Recruiter of the Year, Walter Eddie Saffold, also is a member and finished second to King nationally this year. It's the first time the top two recruiters in the nation have come from the same post in back-to-back years.

The success of Post 267 is no secret. Members use a Reconnect formula at nearby Fort Benning that King calls "one of the top programs in the United States," and the result has been a 500-percent growth since 2000.

"We focus on recruitment, retention and revitalization," said King, a 10-year Legion member. "We know that right now we have amazing opportunities for

recruitment of new members. We need to go out and take advantage of those opportunities. So we do."

King, a retired U.S. Army first sergeant who served at Fort Benning, maintains contacts at the base and routinely makes Reconnect visits with a team of Post 267 Legionnaires. Each team member is responsible for a different aspect of the Reconnect.

"We have one person who talks about benefits and another who acts as a service officer," King said. "Every person has a different job to do and talks for seven or eight minutes. Then I close out by taking questions."

In order to prepare for these sessions, King says the post conducts a breakfast workshop every three months to train Legionnaires on how to answer questions that may come up during a Reconnect visit.

"When you go out recruiting, questions are asked," he said. "You have to have the answers. We know we are going to get some people who say, 'I just don't want to join The American Legion.' That's when you start telling them about programs in the Legion, like Boys State, Oratoricals, Legion Baseball. You make them understand that they aren't just going to be a number in the organization."

The post also conducts other activities, such as carnivals for the families of deployed servicemembers and monthly membership appreciation nights to recognize Fort

Benning units. And whenever Fort Benning inducts noncommissioned officers, Post 267 hosts the event.

"The leadership at (Fort Benning) pushes The American Legion," King said. "They want their soldiers to go where things are going to be done right, so they tell them to go to The American Legion."

Post 267 Legionnaires are persistent in all of their recruiting efforts, not just at Fort Benning.

"If we see a retired-veteran tag on a car, we ask that person if he or she is a part of The American Legion," King said. "We feel every veteran should be a part of The American Legion."

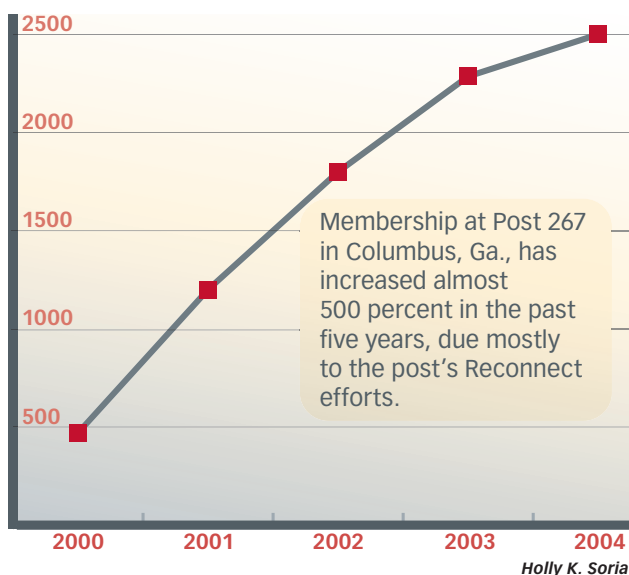
"Our success isn't just because of me. It's because we have people who believe in what The American Legion stands for."

— Steve Brooks



Nathaniel King of Post 267 in Columbus, Ga., has recruited more than 900 veterans to join The American Legion. *James V. Carroll*

Reconnect boon



2004 MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

All-time highs

Departments of Nevada, Delaware and Florida

Traditional 100-percent membership

Departments of Delaware, Vermont and Puerto Rico

girls now go to school for the first time. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.”

Bush defended his decision to invade Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. “When we sent inspectors, or when the U.N. sent inspectors into Iraq, (Hussein) systematically deceived the inspectors,” Bush said. “So I had a choice to make: do I forget the lessons of Sept. 11 and take the word of a madman, or do I take action to defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time. Even though we did not find the stockpiles that we thought we would find, Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons of mass destruction, and he could have passed that capability on to the enemy, and that was a risk we could not afford to take after Sept. 11. Knowing what I know today, I would have taken the same action. America and the world are



Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry hugs a supporter after promising Legionnaires he will strengthen VA. **Tom Stratman**

safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.”

The president also reaffirmed his support for a constitutional amendment to protect the U.S. Flag from desecration. “Our fighting men and women are serving America under a proud flag, and that flag should be cherished and protected,” he said, prompting another standing ovation. “Like you, I support a

constitutional amendment to protect the flag from desecration. I think (Sen.) John McCain put it best when he said, ‘American blood has been shed all over the world for the American flag, and I believe it deserves respect.’”

Bush also praised Principi and what his department has done toward improving veterans health care.

“I am proud of the job that our secretary is doing,” Bush said. “Thanks in large part to Tony’s leadership, my administration has a solid record of accomplishment for our veterans. When my 2005 budget request is approved by Congress, we will have increased overall funding for our nation’s veterans by

almost \$20 billion, or 40 percent, since 2001. We have increased funding for our veterans more in four years than the previous administration did in eight years. We have increased VA medical-care funding by 41 percent over the last four years. We’re bringing care to more veterans more quickly. Since 2001, we have enrolled 2.5 million more

42 Reaffirm Support for Transitional Assistance Program for separating servicemembers.

43 Support Full Funding for Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS).

44 Support Improvement of VETS.

49 Oppose Transfer of VETS to Department of Veterans Affairs.

50 Oppose Eliminating or Outsourcing of VETS programs.

51 Amend Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998 to include those who served honorably 179 days or more.

52 “Hire a Veteran” Week.

53 Support Staffing Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERS), As Required by Law.

54 Reaffirm Support for Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act (SMOCTA).

55 Support Tax Credits for Certain Employers who pay difference between military and civilian pay to employees called to military duty.

56 Support Recognition of Military Service and Pay When Calculating Starting Federal Civilian Salaries.

58 Support Disabled Veterans as Priority Under Americans With Disabilities Act.

59 Support Job Protection for Service-Connected Veterans Requiring Visits at VA Facilities.

66 Reaffirm Support of the Small Business Administration’s Office of Veterans Business Development.

69 Delimiting Date for Using the GI Bill should be waived on case-by-case basis.

73 Supports Funding for Homeless Programs.

75 Supports Reimbursement for Correspondence and Distance Learning Courses to veterans at 90 percent of tuition rate.

Countdown to 'Impact'

Legion family members turn out to cast votes in presidential straw poll.

American Legion Auxiliary member Diana Garman knows all about increasing voter awareness. The incoming president for the Department of Oklahoma has organized several voter-registration events at Unit 141 in Claremore, Okla. Naturally, Garman planned to stop by The American Legion's "Impact 2004: Military and Veterans Vote" booth set up outside the Delta Ballroom in the Gaylord Opryland Hotel.

"I think this is a wonderful idea," Garman said. "I'm constantly telling veterans, 'You are the ones who fought to keep us free, and now one of the rights we have because of that is to vote so we can keep our country this way.'"

"One of the most important things we can do in our communities is make people aware of the issues and encourage them to get out and vote."

In March, the Legion launched the "Impact 2004" campaign, which is aimed at increasing both voter registration and awareness among servicemembers and veterans. At the booth, Legion family members could read up on key issues in the president election, as well as the stances of both President George W. Bush and Democratic challenger

John Kerry. There also was the opportunity to register to vote, as well as cast a vote in a straw poll presidential election.

Cecil Phillips, South Carolina's Zone 2 commander, has been coming to national conventions since 1989. A member of Frank Roach Post 34 in Rock Hill, S.C., he appreciated the opportunity to cast an early vote.

"I think this is a very good idea," Phillips said. "I think it's really going to be a close race as far as the popular vote goes. In South Carolina, I think a lot of the older people over age 60 are probably going to vote straight party. But I think the younger people will cross parties in this election. It will be interesting to see where veterans stand in all this."

Results of the poll will be released Nov. 1. While many veterans commented on both candidates, Garman chose to talk about voting itself.

"I tell people that if you don't register to vote or if you don't vote, you can't argue with me about politics," she said. "And if you don't vote because you say your vote won't make a difference, I tell you that the only vote that doesn't matter is the one someone doesn't cast."

— Steve Brooks



Past National Commander Joe Frank casts his vote in the Legion's online presidential straw poll. *Tom Stratman*

76 Supports Homestead Privilege to Veterans.

82 Congress and states should provide Assistance to American Legion Posts Helping Homeless Veterans.

131 Support Preference for Veterans-Owned Businesses.

140 Support the Small Business Loan Program in VA.

214 Oppose Any Weakening of the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program and LVER Programs.

244 Supports Employment of Veterans in Government Workforce.

265 Allow Military Retirees to Apply for Positions in Federal Law Enforcement After Age 37.

268 Credit Service of Military Retirees Towards Federal Employment Benefits.

273 Supports VA Home Loan Guaranty Program.

280 Raise Ceiling on VA Home Loans for Two Legally Married Eligible Veterans.

284 Require VETS to Hire Veterans.

285 VA's Home Loan Guaranty Program should raise limits to at least \$300,000.

289 Support Improvements of VETS Performance Standards.

292 Support Licensure and Certification of Active-Duty Personnel for civilian occupations.

293 Support Major Enhancements for the Montgomery GI Bill.

295 Support Priority of Service for Veterans in All State Employment Services Agencies' (SESA) One-Stop Centers.

296 Support the Development of Veterans On-the-Job Training Opportunities.

297 Support the National Veterans Training Institute.

298 Urge State Employment Security Agencies to Report Veterans' Wages at Placement.



Staff Sgt. Ed Stevens plays "Taps" during the convention's patriotic prayer service. **Tom Strattman**

veterans in health-care services. We have increased outpatient visits from 44 million to 54 million. We've increased the number of prescriptions filled from 98 million to 116 million. We've reduced the backlog of disability claims by about a third. We will reduce it even further. We have cut the average time it takes to process disability claims by 70 days. We're getting the job done for our veterans.

"We have focused resources on

veterans who need it most, those with service-related disabilities and low incomes and special needs. We've established a new scheduling system to make certain that veterans seeking care for a service-connected condition are the first in line. For more than a century, federal law prohibited disabled veterans from receiving both their military retired pay and their VA disability compensation. Combat-injured and severely disabled veterans deserve better. I

was the first president in over a hundred years to sign concurrent-receipt legislation."

Kerry also saw eye to eye with Legionnaires on several issues and received the most enthusiastic response when talking about improving the VA health-care system.

"In recent weeks, you have heard from some who have claimed that the job is getting done for veterans," Kerry said. "Well, just saying the job is getting done doesn't make it so. My friends, let me tell you when the job will be done. The job will be done when 500,000 veterans are not excluded from the VA health-care system, when we stop closing VA hospitals so that veterans don't have to struggle or travel extraordinary distances to get the care they need. The job will be done when the government stops asking veterans for increased co-payments, enrollment fees and other charges to shift the burden of care to other veterans and drive more than a million veterans out of the system.

"The job will be done when 400,000 military retirees get full concurrent receipt. If you earned a

302 Supports Veterans Preference for Housing in the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

303 Supports Veterans Small Business Opportunities.

360 Supports Veterans Hiring Preference from Employers with Federal Contracts or Grants.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

David Rehbein (IA), Chairman

1 Applauds Sovereignty in Iraq.

4 Support for Taiwan.

5 Support for Peaceful Resolution of Taiwan Strait Tensions.

104 Urges isolating state sponsors of terrorism in U.S. Relations with Africa.

193 Supports improving Humans Rights in Vietnam.

194 Supports Adequate Resourcing for the U.S. Department of State.

195 Urges maintaining security of Panama Canal.

196 U.S. government should use all means necessary to systematically and completely eliminate Terrorism.

197 U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives must include achievement of world peace with freedom using a peace through strength posture; support for ending the scourge of terrorism, participation in security alliances provided allies contribute their fair share; opposition to spread of WMDs; and recognition that the president is chief architect of U.S. foreign policy and protection of U.S. vital interests worldwide.

252 Supports Free Trade Area of The Americas.

253 Supports U.S. control of Guantanamo Bay Naval Base and the development of democracy and a free market in Cuba.

254 Supports U.S.-Latin American Educational Programs as long as students are verified as legitimate before obtaining visas.

Top Army official pushes VA-DoD partnership for disabled veterans.

Acting Army Secretary Les Brownlee calls today's U.S. military "the next greatest generation." At The American Legion's 86th National Convention, Brownlee said, "Our soldiers today have inherited the difficult task of maintaining the freedom that each of you fought to defend, in Europe or the Pacific, in Korea or Southeast Asia, in the Middle East or other now-quiet battlefields. Through courage and selfless service, our soldiers have always answered the call to duty, and they will continue to defend the United States." The retired colonel and decorated Vietnam War veteran manages the Army's \$80 billion budget and 1.3 million active duty, National Guard, Army Reserve and civilian personnel. A Silver Star and Purple Heart recipient, Brownlee believes the Army has a solemn duty to help disabled veterans make successful transitions to new occupations or home stations in the Army. He recently spoke with *The American Legion Magazine*.



Acting Army Sec. Les Brownlee greets a World War II veteran during a ceremony commemorating the 60th anniversary of D-Day.

SSG Daniel J. Reynolds, U.S. Army

Q: Mr. Secretary, can you explain the Disabled Soldier Support System (DS3) Program for us?

Acting Secretary Brownlee: When this war began, and it became apparent it would be going for a little while, and we started having wounded soldiers come back ... and some of them had injuries that clearly indicated they probably would not be allowed to stay in the military, a significant number of soldiers, despite some wounds that are not insignificant – loss of limbs, loss of eyes, things like that – these soldiers want to stay in the war. They really all want to go back to their units, to their buddies. Clearly in some cases they could not. So some of them would be transferring ... transitioning from the Department of the Army to the VA back to private lives. In past wars occasionally a soldier fell through the gap and got overlooked or something was lost in his file. I called (VA Secretary Anthony Principi) and suggested that we get some of our people together and set up a system to ensure that no one falls through the cracks. Tony wholeheartedly agreed and we ended with some of his people at Walter Reed – working there – and other hospitals making all of this happen. We did that for several months and then within the army we decided we needed to institutionalize it. We wanted to be sure that if a soldier – after leaving the hospital and going home – had some benefit that he was unsure of, or some question, could get a response. So we set up a Web site (www.ArmyDS3.org) and a phone number (1-800-833-6622) and put an office together and manned it so that any soldier, any time, could call up and get the right answer, get the right information to whatever question he had. We called it the Disabled Soldier's Support System. The intent is to track a soldier from the time of casualty notification all the way through treatment, recovery, rehabilitation, therapy, and if they remain in the service, fine. If they transition out of the military, then it continues. And veterans service

organizations like The American Legion have been very forthcoming in offering to help these soldiers who are transitioning out and helping them find new professions.

Q: Are the other services interested?

A: They really don't have the numbers of casualties now that the Army does, but the Marines are starting to. If (for instance) a Marine calls – or someone from any other service – they are to be helped the same way. And sometimes people ask, "What if somebody calls requesting help is a Vietnam vet or something?" Help them. Give them whatever assistance you can. We put it together and formulated it to address the situation right now, but we don't want it to be limited to just them. Anybody who's out there that needs the service, we'll help.

Q: What is your observation – what you've seen in Iraq and Afghanistan – compared to what we've been hearing in the media?

A: Anytime that you're getting your information through the news organizations, you getting a more pessimistic, dismal side than what you get over there. It's not that it's not a serious situation. It is. It's a tough situation and there's a lot of hard and difficult work to do. But the thing that I find is how optimistic and encouraging the soldiers are. They pretty much know what they're doing. They get it. You go over there, and talk to them and you come back motivated, yourself. These men and women who have volunteered to serve their country while their country's at war are extraordinary young people. So I just can't say enough good about them. I think they deserve all of the attention we can give them. Anything we can do for them we've got to do. They're certainly carrying a heavy load right now.

– Interview: John Raughter

pension, it's yours – just like in the private sector. If you get a disability payment, it is because you have suffered. I don't believe you subtract what you suffered from what you earned. The job will be done when there are no homeless veterans on the streets of America, when 320,000 veterans are no longer waiting for decisions on disability claims and another 100,000 are no longer awaiting appeals decisions. The job will be done when the VA secretary doesn't have to complain that he needs \$1.2 billion more, because he was turned down by a White House that spent the money on tax cuts for those at the top instead. I believe veterans come first.

"The job will be done when we repeal the tax on military widows. And, mark my words, the job will be done when the family of 21-year-old Jay Briseno, a veteran facing a lifetime of disability, doesn't have to sleep at his bedside because the VA can't afford to give him the round-the-clock nursing care he needs. That's not right, that's certainly not compassionate, and that won't happen when I'm president."



Fred Holder of the 2nd District Color Guard, Porter County, Ind., salutes during Saturday's color-guard competition. *Tom Stratman*

While Kerry praised the job U.S. servicemembers have performed, he criticized Bush's military strategy and offered what would have been his approach to the war on terrorism.

"I would have relied on American troops in Tora Bora when we had bin Laden in our sights," he said. "I never would have diverted resources so quickly from Afghanistan before finishing the

job. I would've given the inspectors the time they needed to do the job. I wouldn't have ignored my senior military advisers. I would've made sure that every soldier put in harm's way had the equipment and body armor they needed. I would have built a strong, broad coalition of our allies around the world.

"And, if there's one thing I learned from my service, I would

255 Supports the *War on Drugs*.

256 Continue economic aid to friendly, democratic nations in *Central America*.

260 Permit *Social Security Benefits for Non-Resident Alien Spouses* residing in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama.

321 Make *Priority POW/MIA Actions* by obtaining fullest possible accounting and remains of missing U.S. servicemembers from all wars.

322 Reform the *United Nations* in several areas, including the establishment of an equitable fiduciary relationship with the United States and admittance of Taiwan for full membership.

323 *America's Leadership in the New Millennium* should include a bipartisan foreign policy that secures peace and security for the United States, a reevaluation of strategic relationships and a review of all diplomatic relations and collective security agreements.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Herman G. Harrington (NY), Chairman

326 *Preserve World War I Veterans Memorial in Mojave Desert* and preclude courts from awarding attorney fees to groups such as the ACLU for bringing lawsuits to remove religious symbols.

402 *Support an Amendment to the Internal Revenue Code to Require the Secretary of the Treasury to Set the Charitable (Volunteer) Standard Mileage.*

403 *Award Medal of Freedom to (Past National Commander and Author of GI Bill) Harry Colmery.*

404 Urges state legislatures to award *Legal Immunity for Volunteers* supporting their communities except those who demonstrate willful, gross or intentional negligence.

405 Expresses *Appreciation to Host City* of Nashville, Tenn., for supporting the 86th National Convention.

When America's hometown goes to war

Lt. Gen. Steven Blum is Chief of the National Guard Bureau. He is responsible for formulating, developing and coordinating all policies, programs and plans for more than 500,000 Army and Air National Guard personnel. In his address to the National Convention, he spoke about today's citizen soldiers. Below is an excerpt:

In the past, only a small percentage of Guard members were veterans. Today, over 60 percent of the Army and Air National Guard are combat veterans. Right now, about 20 percent – one in five – of our active-duty soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines are deployed. In the National Guard, the percentage is even higher. Twenty-seven percent of Army and Air National Guard troops are deployed around the world today. That's over 100,000 citizen soldiers and airmen deployed in 44 countries around the world, taking the fight to our adversaries in the global war on terrorism.

In the next two years, at our current rate, eight out of 10 of our Army and Air National Guardsmen will be combat veterans of this war. The Army and Air National Guard have never been used more than they're being used today. They are defending your homeland right here in America every day, guarding critical infrastructures and key Department of Defense facilities. At the same time, they are responding to reduce human suffering and loss of life and property such as you saw in Hurricane Charlie, forest fires in the West and Northwest, and flooding in the middle Atlantic states. And they're keeping the peace in Bosnia, Kosovo and the Sinai.

There was talk years ago about the National Guard divisions being "Cold War relics" and unnecessary. There are only eight National Guard divisions. When the 42nd Division headquarters deploys to Iraq, seven of the eight National Guard divisions will have deployed overseas in

the global war on terrorism within the last five years. Soon, all eight will be engaged. That is a different National Guard than your father's National Guard. We have become an essential force. Forty percent of American soldiers in

Iraq are Guardsmen and reservists. This nation should never send its sons and daughters to war for anything, to any place, without the National Guard going, because when you call out the National Guard, you call out America, and you send America's hometown to war.

If anyone tells you that people join the National Guard to avoid the draft, I would like to explain something. The draft ended 31 years ago. And if there's still

somebody serving in the National Guard to avoid the draft, they've probably deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, Bosnia, Haiti or Guantanamo. Or they're standing guard here in the United States. These young men and women who have answered the call today are the finest that I have seen in my 37 years in uniform. None of them has to be here, and all of them responded when called. Not a single citizen soldier failed to report when called to duty. That is a very strong testimony. Don't let anybody tell you that the young people today are not up to the task. They are up to the task.



Lt. Gen. Steven Blum describes the new National Guard. *James V. Carroll*

NATIONAL SECURITY

Allen L. Titus (IN), Chairman

10 Supports Awarding the Cold War Victory Medal.

11 Opposes Foreign Investments in the American Defense Industries.

12 Urges Rebuilding America's Defense Industrial Base.

27 Supports Domestic Energy and Production by building new nuclear plants, increasing U.S. petroleum exploration and conservation.

28 Local governments affected by storage and disposal of Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Waste should be involved in the planning process and receive appropriate benefits.

77 Supports Alternative Energy Resources.

78 Supports Energy Conservation.

116 Supports properly Wearing the U.S. Flag Patch on U.S. Army uniforms.

121 Supports Aeronautical Production and Space Exploration.

122 Supporting the National Space Program.

123 Supports Funding the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Budgets.

124 Supports for the U.S. Air Force.

156 National Security Principles should include reassessing missions and resource alignment, retaining Selective Service registration, realistic funding of weapons and training, honoring obligations to troops and veterans, and an enhanced GI Bill for education.

157 Ensure a Strong National Defense through several measures including enhanced military quality of life, annual defense spending of 3.5 percent of GDP, realistic funding of force modernization, and an expression of gratitude for men and women in uniform.

158 Urges government contractors to Buy American.

159 Supports National Missile Defense System.

never have gone to war without a plan to win the peace.”

Kerry also spoke on the economy and its effects on those currently in, or just leaving, the military.

“When our soldiers plan the family budget, we believe they deserve more than four more years of a government that’s going deeper and deeper into debt,” Kerry said. “Our plan will cut the deficit in half in the next four years. We will do it by passing the reforms John McCain and I have fought for to end corporate welfare – and by making government stay within a budget, just like you do. When our soldiers pay their taxes, we believe they deserve better than four more years of a fiscal policy that has raised the tax burden on middle-class families. Our plan will cut taxes for the middle class and working families – to help them pay for health care, child care and sending a son or daughter to college.

“And when our soldiers and their families get sick, I really believe they deserve better than four more years of rising costs, skyrocketing premiums, and no plan to do anything about it.



National Adjutant Robert Spanogle presents his 1942 WLA Harley Davidson motorcycle during the convention parade. The motorcycle was originally shipped to the Russians for use in World War II. *James V. Carroll*

Health-care costs are crushing business and individuals alike. ... I believe we have an important obligation to see to it that that America is no longer the only industrialized nation in the world that doesn’t understand that health care is not a privilege for the wealthy, the connected and the elected – it is a right for every single American.”

More Power at the Podium. Bush and Kerry weren’t the only prominent speakers to address the convention. VA’s Principi, Homeland Security’s Ridge, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Richard Myers and the nation’s top National Guard official all delivered stirring speeches to the assembly.

“I’m here to tell you how very proud I am to be your secretary,

160 Calls for clear guidelines and exit strategy for *U.S. Forces in Peacekeeping Operations*.

161 Supports *The Armed Forces Retirement Homes*.

162 Continue *The Transformation of the Armed Forces*.

163 Retain and expand *The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences*.

164 Support for the *Armed Forces and their Families*.

165 *Combating Crime in America* through several measures, including abolishing parole for first-degree murder, more jail time for certain first-time offenders, juvenile boot camps and mandatory sentencing.

166 Support for the *Second Amendment*.

167 Supports *Department Firefighter of the Year Awards*.

168 Supports *Funding Homeland Security*.

169 Support for *Homeland Security and the War on Terrorism*.

170 Support for the *Non-Federal Roles of the National Guard*.

171 Support for *State Defense Forces*.

172 Support for the *Jones Maritime Act and Related Cabotage Laws*.

173 Promote *Commercial Shipbuilding for Defense*.

174 Fully fund *DoD Healthcare for Military Beneficiaries*.

175 Modify *Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act* in several areas and only include military pay in judicial determinations of appropriate support on a case-by-case basis.

176 *The American Legion’s Position on the DoD’s Force Health Protection Program* urges continued congressional oversight and the tracking and following up with proper medical care.

177 Urges continued congressional oversight, follow-up, re-evaluation, care and development of new vaccines for



Trevor Bacon of Post 249, Indianapolis, salutes the colors during Sunday's parade. **Tom Strattman**

Patriotism on parade

Bob Burger has marched in worse conditions.

The Legionnaire from Post 62 in Chillicothe, Ohio, has attended more than 10 national conventions. In Nashville, he marched as part of the Department of Ohio's color guard, along a mile-long parade route around the Opryland Hotel, finishing up a little damp from heavy humidity and 81-degree temperatures.

"The best thing, I think, is when you march past a little kid, and he salutes the flag," Burger said. "You get a tingling feeling when you see that."

Ninety-three delegations, bands and honored guests comprised the parade. Some walked; others rode in cars and vans. The Legion Riders rode in formation down the final stretch of the parade route.

The Department of Minnesota provided a sea of U.S. Flags to parade viewers, while the Iowa delegations carried corn stalks. National Commander John Brieden witnessed the entire display from the viewing stands, staying until the final delegations passed the finish line.

Mother Nature provided gray skies that eventually turned blue, and when the sun came out, temperatures climbed, but the day did not turn into one of the hot August scorches for which the South is known.

"I think it could have been harder on the older veterans," said Dick Mollers, one of Minnesota's incoming vice commanders and a member of Post 187 in Glenwood. "It was a little difficult at times with the humidity."

This parade was Mollers' third, and he says he gets the same thrill every time.

"It's always fun to participate in the parade, especially when you look back and see the mass colors like Minnesota had," he said. "It gives you goosebumps to see all those American flags."

— Steve Brooks



LEFT: Commander John Brieden arrives in style. **Tom Strattman**

BELOW: Florida Junior Auxiliary members Angelina Francalancia and Amber Lynn, both 10, display patriotic pride. **James V. Carroll**

CENTER: Five-year-old Jessica Ferris, Junior Auxiliary member of Post 5, Nashville, Tenn., waves a miniature flag as Old Glory marches by. **Tom Strattman**



ABOVE: A Legion Rider rumbles along the parade route. **Tom Strattman**

LEFT: Boy Scout Luigi Sosta, 7, is a member of Middle Tennessee Council Troop 325 Color Guard. **James V. Carroll**



John Brieden works the convention floor during a recap of his year as national commander. *James V. Carroll*

and I'm here to tell you how humbled I am to be your secretary," Principi told the delegates. "You, individually and collectively, embody what it means to be an American. When your country needed you, you answered the call. When you came home and

hung up your uniform, you continued to serve.

"And I'm very proud of the accomplishments we've seen in the last three and a half years. It wouldn't have happened without your advocacy. Never before in the history of my department has

our budget increased by such a level. Never before have we cared for more veterans. One million more have received care since 2001. We've made great progress (with backlogs), but we need to stay the course."

Ridge said that while America

The Anthrax Vaccine Immunization Program.

178 *The American Legion Policy of the Use of Deplete Uranium* calls for additional scientific study and proper protective measures for personnel working near the munitions.

179 *Support for the Selective Service System Registration Program.*

180 Calls for *TRICARE Eligibility for Members of the Reserve Components and their Dependents.*

181 Urges *Reforming the Military Absentee Voting System* so all military personnel and their families will have their votes counted.

183 Supports *Military Commissaries.*

184 Codify *Burial Eligibility for Arlington National Cemetery* and oppose waivers for those unqualified.

185 Supports *Service of Women in the Armed Forces* but opposing their service in direct combat specialties, including assignment on submarines.

186 *Provisions of Status of Forces Agreements* should be re-negotiated and should allow use of facilities by retired U.S. servicemembers and dependents.

187 Supports *Total Force Policy and Viable National Guard and Reserve Forces.*

188 Supports *Age 55 Military Retirement for Reservists.*

190 Supports *Fully Funding the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps.*

191 Supports *the U.S. Coast Guard in Homeland Security.*

204 Urges *the Navy to commission a USS American Legion.*

238 Issue *DD214s for Activated Guardsmen and Reservists.*

317 Supports *The Medal of Honor for Dorie Miller, USN.*

434 *The American Legion Role in Homeland Security* urges Legionnaires, posts and departments to assist in local communities and work with Citizen Corps.

Annual award recipients

FRANK N. BELGRANO JR. TROPHY

For support of Boy Scouts

Department of Florida

RALPH T. O'NEIL EDUCATION TROPHY

For showing the greatest Americanism activity in use of The American Legion School Medal Awards

Department of Florida

WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST AMERICANISM TROPHY

Department of Virginia

FOURTH ESTATE AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING JOURNALISM

Mark Benjamin

United Press International

For investigative reporting that uncovered the plight of hundreds of sick and wounded U.S. soldiers "languishing" in hot cement barracks at Fort Stewart, Ga., while they waited – sometimes for months – to see doctors. His reporting prompted the Pentagon to rush doctors and dollars to Fort Stewart to provide assistance to Army Reserve and National Guard troops awaiting treatment.

EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR

For companies or businesses dedicated to hiring veterans

Small business

Wheatland Tube Company,
Wheatland, Pa.

Mid-size business

Wackenhut Service Inc.,
Spring Lake, N.C.

Large business

Anderson Iron Works Inc.,
Post Falls, Idaho

NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER OF THE YEAR

Howard County Police
Officer 1st Class Patrick W.
Eckley, Ellicott City, Md.

LOCAL VETERANS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE YEAR

Claud Miller, Anniston, Ala.

OUTSTANDING DISABLED VETERANS OUTREACH PROGRAM SPECIALIST OF THE YEAR

Jim Balog, Helena, Mont.



SPIRIT OF SERVICE AWARD WINNERS

Enlisted armed services members honored for volunteering in their local communities

Coast Guard

Petty Officer 2nd Class Patricia Johnson

Navy

Petty Officer 2nd Class Luciana A. Rodriques

Air Force

Staff Sgt. Catherin C. Lammon

Army

Spec. Russell A. Burnham

Marine Corps

Cpl. Clinton F. Firstbrook (*absent from photo*)

OUTSTANDING EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICE OF THE YEAR

Pocatello Job Service
Office, Pocatello, Idaho

WILLIAM F. LENKER NATIONAL SERVICE TROPHY

For best supporting and implementing programs to benefit veterans and their families

Department of Ohio

GARLAND MURPHY AWARD

For providing the most contributions to Child Welfare Foundation

Department of
Minnesota



YOUTH PROGRAM HONOREES

American Legion Baseball Player of the Year

Jared James Willis

Junior Shooting Sports Champion

Wesley Hess

Oratorical Champion

Philip Bishop

Boys Nation President

Stephen Riley Harvell

Eagle Scout of the Year

Garrett Martin

CWF LEGACY AWARD

For contributing the most funds to Children's Miracle Network by the department's entire Legion family

Department of Ohio

JAMES V. DAY "GOOD GUY" AWARD

Dolly Parton

COLOR GUARD CONTEST WINNERS

Military class

Second District Color Guard, Indiana

Military open class

Frank E. Booma Post 6, Portsmouth, N.H.

Open class

Unit 469 "Spirit of 469," Cleveland

Advancing/Retrieving Colors Contest

Second District Color Guard, Indiana

BAND CONTEST WINNERS

Concert Band

Band of the Tonawandas, Tonawanda, N.Y.

Parade Band

Band of the Tonawandas, Tonawanda, N.Y.

now is safer than it's ever been, keeping it that way requires a grassroots effort. "(Homeland security) is a national strategy, not a federal one," Ridge said. "It is a philosophy underpinned by shared responsibility, shared leadership, shared accountability – a shared imperative. The protection of this nation cannot be micromanaged from Washington, D.C. Instead, it must be a priority in every city, every neighborhood and every home across America. And so, homeland security in the 21st century is really about the integration of a nation, and nations – led by national leaders, but also governors, mayors, airline personnel, border patrol agents, the intelligence community, law enforcement, firefighters, diplomatic officers, business leaders, international partners – citizens and freedom-loving people everywhere."

Myers praised U.S. troops for continuing what Legionnaires started decades ago. "The legacy that you have worked so hard to create is in very good hands," he said. "They are safeguarding the freedoms you fought so hard to



Ed Whitney of Liverpool, N.Y., looks over a display of military pins in the convention's Expo Hall. **Tom Strattman**

preserve. They have a humble confidence and a steely determination. Most important, they represent the values of the American people. The most important weapon in our arsenal is our values."

And Lt. Gen. Steven Blum, bureau chief of the National Guard, updated Legionnaires on the changing role of the National Guard, focusing on the war against terrorism.

"In the next two years, eight out of 10 (National Guard) members will be combat veterans of this war," Blum said. "It's a different National Guard than your father's National Guard or your older brother's National Guard. Forty percent of the soldiers in Iraq are Guardsmen and reservists, and these men and women who answered that call today are the finest I have ever seen."

435 Supports *The Pentagon Channel*.

436 Urges full *Concurrent Receipts of Military, Retired and Severance Pay and VA Disability Compensation for Disabled Retirees and Servicemembers* and the elimination of phase-in provisions.

437 Supports and fund *Quality of Life Features* for U.S. Military, Guard, Reserve, veterans and their families.

438 Supports keeping *Relevant and Ready the U.S. Army*.

439 Supports *The Citizen Corps*.

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

Paul A. Morin (MA), Chairman

8 Support the *Automatic Waiver of VBA Debts of \$250 or Less*.

9 *The American Legion Policy on the Correction of Military Records* supports eliminating time restrictions to correct records.

19 Supports *The Establishment of Amyotrophic Lateral*

Sclerosis as a Gulf War Presumptive Disease.

20 *The American Legion Policy on VA Medical School Affiliations*.

21 *Protect Disability Rating After Ten Years*.

22 *Request Congress Provide VA Adequate Funding for Medical and Prosthetic Research Activities*.

23 *Support Presumption of Service Connection for Hepatitis C*.

90 *Support Legislation to Remove the Bar on the Payment of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Benefits to Surviving Spouses Who Remarry After Age 55*.

92 *Support Special Pension for World War I Veterans*.

103 *Improve the Disability and Death Pension Program*.

105 *All Veterans Receive "Wartime" Benefits For Active Military Service Between Feb. 28, 1961, and Aug. 5, 1964*.

111 *Extend Presumptive Period for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis to Seven Years*.

Legion offers identity-theft protection

The American Legion is working with the National Association of International Travelers Inc. to provide American Legion family members with protection against a crime that can adversely and permanently affect your financial situation.

Identity theft is the fastest-growing financial crime in the United States. According to the Federal Trade Commission, more than 27 million Americans have been affected by identity theft in the past five years. Nearly 10 million Americans were victim in 2002, with a staggering cost to consumers of \$53 billion. The average victim spends \$1,500, not including attorney fees and time spent away from work to clear their names. An estimated 2,000 people a day lose their identity to thieves.

Identity theft occurs whenever an unauthorized individual uses your personal information – name, Social Security number or credit-card numbers – to open new accounts or charge merchandise in your name without your knowledge or permission. People whose identities have been stolen can spend months or years – and thousands of dollars – cleaning up the mess thieves have made of their good name and credit record. In the meantime, victims can lose job opportunities, be refused loans for education, or even be arrested for crimes they didn't commit.

Now, Legion family members can take advantage of this identity-theft protection service by calling **(800) 433-3318** or going online to **www.legion.org/**



The American Legion

ID Theft

Homeland Defense in your **HOME**

idtheft. Identity-theft protection is available in coverage limits of \$10,000 and \$20,000, and both are available with a zero deductible.

When you file a claim with Legion ID Theft, you will receive a complete kit of materials to assist in the process of clearing your name. The identity-theft recovery kit includes pre-filled professional letters to send to creditors and bureaus.

Victims may endure a number of costly steps to dispute fraudulent debt and accounts opened by an identity thief. The American Legion Identity Theft expense coverage reimburses an individual for:

- Lost wages up to \$500 per week, subject to the \$2,000 aggregate limit;
- Legal defense fees and expenses;
- Costs for refilling loan applications; and
- Costs for notarizing documents, long-distance phone calls and postage.

The cost of the service is \$24.95 per year for \$10,000 worth of protection and \$34.95 per year for \$20,000 worth of protection.

Note: Insurance underwritten by member companies of American International Group Inc. The description herein is a summary only. It does not include all terms, conditions and exclusions of the policies described. Please refer to the actual policies for complete details of coverage and exclusions. Coverage may not be available in all jurisdictions.

– Steve Brooks

112 Restore and Increase Burial and Plot Allowance.

113 Supports VA Involvement in the Department of Homeland Security and call for VA to be properly funded to do this.

114 The American Legion Policy on the National Cemetery Administration includes support for additional cemeteries and opposition to user fees.

141 Supports The GI Bill of Health, including Medicare reimbursement and allowing dependents to use VA.

143 The American Legion Policy on Agent Orange includes urging completion of scientific study and entitlement of presumptions to veterans and their children.

149 The American Legion Policy on VA Mental Health Services calls for a VA-based model to address mental health needs of veterans and for annual congressional oversight.

153 Supports VA Role in National Emergency Preparedness and calls for proper funding.

154 The American Legion Policy on the State Veterans Home Program calls for VA funding 50 percent of daily care rates and full reimbursement of nursing-home care to 70 percent or higher service-connected veterans.

155 Calls for Revision of the Work-Rate Standards for VA Adjudicators so they do not receive work-credit for a claim until it becomes final.

198 The American Legion Policy on Radiation seeking legislation to eliminate radiation dose estimate requirements in claims for veterans exposed to ionizing radiation.

199 The American Legion policy on Prostate Cancer and Research and Treatment calling for increased VA funding.

200 Support Medicare Reimbursement for VA.

201 Supports Open-ended Presumptive Period for Undiagnosed Illnesses for Gulf War Veterans.

Service Equals Membership.

With the University of Michigan fight song, "Hail to the Victors," echoing through the Delta Ballroom, Department of Michigan delegates marched up and down each row, campaigning for Cadmus for national commander. A short time later, the Hon. Judge H.F. "Sparky" Gierke of North Dakota swore in Cadmus.

"He's been active in The American Legion for a long time, especially in a lot of grass-roots projects," said Ronald Schrieber, a member of Post 274 in Oscoda, Mich., and a participant in the procession backing Cadmus. "He supports Legion programs wholeheartedly, and he's a good man for the job. He believes in the Legion ideals."

After accepting the nomination, Cadmus vowed to lead the Legion through a year in which service is the No. 1 priority.

"My motto for this year is, 'Service equals membership,'" said Cadmus, a member of the Glen H. Daykin Post 155 in Britton, Mich., and a resident of Ypsilanti, Mich. "At the close of



Geri Bradley of Michigan shows her support for candidate Tom Cadmus, who was sworn in as the Legion's national commander. **Tom Stratman**

World War I, our founding fathers knew they needed to take care of their fellow soldiers, their widows and their dependents, and that's why they started The American Legion. The American Legion has always supported the Veterans Administration and the

formulation of programs to assist our men and women, and their dependents, who have gone off to protect this great country of ours."

Cadmus also announced "The American Legion Blue Star Salute" campaign, which will honor local members of the U.S. Armed Forces, along with their families, during Armed Forces Day celebrations.

"I ask each and every Legionnaire and member of The American Legion to hold a hometown Blue Star Salute next May," Cadmus said.

Sandi Dutton of Beltsville, Md., was elected national president during the American Legion Auxiliary's national convention, and Michael J. Deacon of Ames, Iowa, was elected national commander of Sons of The American Legion. 🌿

Steve Brooks, editor of The American Legion Dispatch, is a contributing editor to The American Legion Magazine.

Article design: Holly K. Soria

202 *The American Legion Policy on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses* calls for VA to devote appropriate resources, further studies and continued development of the Persian Gulf Registry.

203 *Provide Full Funding for VA Construction Program.*

206 *Annual State of VA Medical Facilities Report* by The American Legion be given to the National Convention and the U.S. President.

212 *Include World War II Veterans in Priority Group 6 for VA Health Care.*

217 *Exempt VA Benefits and Services from Pay-Go Provisions.*

218 *Urge VA to Establish a Policy for Reimbursement of Payments When a Claim for Service Connection Is Awarded.*

219 *Oppose Legislation Authorizing Legion-Accredited Representatives to Develop Claims for VA.*

220 *Oppose Increased Co-Payments and Enrollment Free for Priority Groups 7 and 8 Veterans to Receive VA Health Care.*

221 *Support Legislation to Mandate the National Institutes of Health to Reimburse VA for the Facility and Administrative ("Indirect") Costs of NIH-Funded Research Conducted at VA.*

235 *Amend Title 38, U.S. Code, to Remove the Specific Date for the Award of Indemnity Compensation Benefits for Surviving Spouses of Former POWs.*

236 *The American Legion Policy on VA National Service Life Insurance* calling for re-opening of the program for at least one year to disabled veterans.

237 *The American Legion Policy on Nurse Recruitment and Retention* calling for VA to provide competitive wages.

239 *Support Research About Breast Cancer.*

305 *Reduce the Number of Years of 100 Percent Service Connection Required for DIC Purposes.*



FAR LEFT: National Commander Thomas P. Cadmus and Auxiliary President Sandi Dutton wave to the crowd. *James V. Carroll*

LEFT: Michael Deacon of Ames, Iowa, is the new Sons of The American Legion national commander. *James V. Carroll*

BELOW: The new national commander, right, salutes the colors with his son, Brian, and daughter, Nicole. *Tom Strattnan*



306 *Exempt Certain Income from VA Pension Rate Determination.*

307 *Allow Beneficiaries to Retain \$90 of Their VA Benefits While in Medicaid-Covered Nursing Homes.*

312 *Exempt Purple Heart Recipients from Prescription Co-Payment.*

318 *The American Legion Policy on VA Nursing Home Capacity* calling for increasing unit capacity to higher levels and sufficient funding.

319 *Amend Title 38, U.S. Code, to Increase the Special Monthly Compensation K Award.*

327 *The American Legion Policy Regarding Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs)* affirms its support.

328 VA should continue to study health risks and compensate veterans effected by *Project 112 / Operation "Shipboard Hazard and Defense" (SHAD)*.

329 *The American Legion Policy on VA Compensation* calling for increased COLAS and disability compensation.

330 *The American Legion Policy on Former Prisoners of War* calling for presumptive service-connection for several disabilities.

331 *The American Legion Policy on VA Medical Care Mandatory Funding* stating that Congress should fund VA in this manner.

431 *The American Legion Policy on Opening the Federal Supply Schedule for Pharmaceuticals to Medicare and Medicaid*, opposing such legislation.

432 *The American Legion Policy on VA's Capital Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Program* calling for transparency and active Legion involvement in the process.

433 *The American Legion's Policy on VA's Pharmacy Benefits Program* opposing co-payment increases and supports VA's current policy of extending benefits only to enrolled veterans who use VA physicians or providers.

Roster for a New Legion Year

Charles W. Barrett

National Vice Commander – Central Region



Home: Smyrna, Ga. **Legion membership:** 35 years, Post 160
Military service: U.S. Air Force, 1954-1963
Occupation: Accountant
Legion highlights: Post Adj., 1972-1979; Dept. Sr. Vice Cmdr., 2002-2003; Dept. Cmdr., 2003-2004
National positions: National Security Cmsn., 2000-2001; Internal Affairs Cmsn., 2001-2004
Region: Alabama, Georgia, Florida, France, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Texas

Samuel Barney

National Vice Commander – Midwest Region



Home: Lancaster, Ohio **Legion membership:** 47 years, Post 11
Military service: U.S. Marine Corps, 12 years; U.S. Air Force, 16 years
Occupation: Retired military
Legion highlights: Post Cmdr., 1973-1974; Dept. 1st Vice Cmdr., 1988-1989; Dept. Cmdr., 1989-1990
National Positions: Legislative Cncl., 1975-2000; Sgt.-at-Arms, 1992-1993; Alternate NEC, 1996-1998; NEC, 1998-2000; American Legion Magazine Cmsn., 1990-2004
Region includes: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin

Wayne B. Richey

National Vice Commander – Southeast Region



Home: Greenwood, S.C. **Legion membership:** 28 years, Post 20
Military service: U.S. Army, 1956-1976
Occupation: Retired, U.S. Army
Legion highlights: Post Cmdr., 1980-1981; Zone Cmdr., 1985-1987; Dept. Cmdr., 1989-1990
National Positions: M&PA Cmte., 1985-2004
Region includes: Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia

Marco A. Valenzuela

National Vice Commander – Western Region



Home: Tempe, Ariz. **Legion membership:** 51 years, Post 41
Military service: U.S. Air Force, 1950-1954
Occupation: Retired, U.S. Department of Labor
Legion highlights: Post Cmdr., 1987-1988; Dept. Vice Cmdr., 1989-1990; Dept. Cmdr., 1991-1992
National Positions: Veterans Affairs & Rehab. Cmsn., Economics Cmsn., American Legion Magazine Cmsn.
Region includes: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Mexico, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Philippines, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

Linda M. Thayer

National Vice Commander – Northeast Region



Home: Bellows Falls, Vt. **Legion membership:** 14 years, Post 37
Military service: U.S. Army, 1981-1994
Occupation: Registered nurse
Legion highlights: Post Cmdr., 1995-1996; Dept. Vice Cmdr., 2000-2001; Dept. Cmdr., 2001-2002
National Positions: Distinguished Guests Cmte., 2003-2004
Region includes: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont

Robert A. Mayrand



National Sergeant-at-Arms

Home: Wyandotte, Mich.
Legion membership: 33 years, Post 217
Military service: U.S. Army, seven years
Occupation: Department

of Veterans Affairs

Legion highlights: Post Cmdr., Zone Cmdr., Dept. Sgt.-at-Arms

National Positions: National and Homeland Security Cncl.

James Torrington Akers



National Chaplain

Home: Madison, Kan.
Legion membership: 15 years, Post 5
Military service: U.S. Army, 1952-1953 and 1968-1969; U.S. Army National Guard, 1963-1974

Occupation: Minister, Priest of the Anglican Orthodox Church

Legion highlights: Post Chaplain, Dept. Chaplain, 1997-2004

W. Frazier Brinley



National Historian

Home: Clinton, Conn.
Legion membership: 31 years, Post 103
Military service: U.S. Navy, 1966-1970
Occupation: Sales Associate, U.S.

Postal Service

Legion highlights: Post Cmdr., 1985-1986 and 1994-1995; Dept. Sr. Vice Cmdr., 1999-2000; Dept. Cmdr., 2000-2001; Dept. Historian, 1977-1978, 1987-1989

National Positions: Children & Youth Cmsn., 1991-2004

Roger H. Webster



Aide to the National Commander

Home: Newaygo, Mich.
Legion membership: 30 years, Post 381
Military service: U.S. Air Force, 1959-1963
Occupation:

Self-employed, New-Clean Inc.

Legion highlights: Post Cmdr., 1982-1984; Zone Cmdr., 1998-1999

National Positions: Aerospace Cmte., Foreign Relations Cmte., Military Affairs Cmte.

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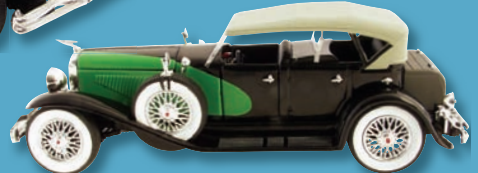
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Modern Mythology

Conspiracy theories, no matter how fantastic, captivate a public always hungry for a new hoax.

BY DENNIS MCCAFFERTY

Can anyone doubt we live in the golden age of conspiracy theories? No longer confined to churning out their latest revelations on creaky typewriters and cranking up the old mimeograph machines to distribute copies, modern-day conspiracy theorists deploy 21st-century tech tools to get the word out and – thanks to a

ubiquitous and insatiable media – enjoy far more than their requisite 15 minutes of fame.

They're Everywhere. No event is too minor nor too intimidating – whether it's an alien invasion cover-up, Watergate, Koreagate, Iran/Contra-gate, the various Clintongates and, lest we not forget, Moongate (the one about the moon landing being faked, of

course). An abundance of Web sites – the Conspiracy Nets and the Conspiracy Planets out there – post a fresh helping of panic every day. Indeed, if you're counting by Web matches, the topic of conspiracy on the Internet is an even bigger draw than Britney Spears. (And did you happen to know that Spears is actually Satan? At least that's what one online conspiracy theorist contends.)



It's quite a niche, a niche built by those who add confusion to events in need of clarity and offer alternative realities to that which once seemed concrete.

How seriously do people take this stuff? Seriously enough for NASA to shell out some \$15,000 to convince the public that it really *did* land men on the moon. Seriously enough that the line between conspiracy theorists and esteemed newsmakers has become irrevocably blurred. Before the Web, the designation of "pundit" was pretty much limited to the George Will's of the world. Now, the perpetually stressed-out, 20-something producer for that non-stop cable news station has lots of broadcast minutes to fill, and filling them with the latest, wild-eyed conspiracy – regardless of its basis in fact – gets the job done.



Conspiracy Celebrity.

Rising star Alex Jones of Austin started with a local cable-access program, now hosts a radio show broadcast in 80 cities and regularly appears on "Good Morning America," "20/20 Downtown," "60 Minutes," The Discovery Channel, A&E, Court TV and a host of other top national outlets. His site, Infowars.com, gets a staggering 2 million visitors a week. And Jones is only 30 years old. He got started by watching C-SPAN in college, instead of ESPN, actually tracking down the bills discussed, so he could read them himself.

Jones concluded that the so-called partisan wars between Democrats and Republicans were nothing more than "Shakespearian

theater," public posturing to deceive the people. Now, he rails against the "new world order," a conspiratorial assault on the nation's constitutional freedoms under the pretense of the war on terrorism.

As with many of his colleagues, Jones scoffs at being labeled as a conspiracy theorist. But he doesn't protest, either. "I have one of the most diverse audiences imaginable," Jones says. "That's because I expose both conservatives and liberals. The news media says those calling for a halt to the new world order are conspiracy theorists. Well, this new world order is all around the place. Before, half of my phone callers were saying I was a kook. Now, those same people are calling me to apologize, saying this thing really exists. All I've done is wake people up."

Jones is following the lead of



more established theorists, such as Kenn Thomas.

Thomas started Steamshovel Press as a small newsletter in 1988, and, from there, cultivated a multimedia enterprise as the Web bloomed. He has published a dozen books and a niche magazine with 3,000 paying subscribers. He has appeared on Fox and TNN. His theory fodder has inspired “X-Files” episodes and the Mel Gibson movie “Conspiracy Theory.”

Not that the rewards come without risks: “A couple of days after returning from a speaking engagement in Washington, D.C.,” Thomas says, “I came home and the door was locked at the knob, unlocked at the deadbolt. I always lock at the deadbolt and keep the knob unlocked. How’s that for a Mel Gibson scenario? I have reason to believe that one of my writing partners and one of my book publishers were both killed through the use of clostridium bacteria, which also has been found in a large percentage of those weird cattle mutilation cases”

Ancient Art. We’ll just have to take Thomas’ word for it, which leads us to ask where all this began. Conspiracies are hardly an invention of modern times. Shakespeare made his name by packing his pages with deliciously deadly plottings, to the point where even *his* name is the subject of a lingering conspiracy, one proposing that the Bard didn’t actually pen all of those plays. But conspiracies go back further than that. They’re as old as the Scriptures, which are loaded with conspiratorial designs. Think back to the unfortunate, sibling-organized demise of Joseph and his Technicolor Dreamcoat.

University of Maine at Machias

English assistant professor Marcus Librizzi, who teaches a course on the subject, argues that America is a nation born from conspiracy – “bathed in suspicion against government and how it might, without our vigilance, remove our liberties,” he says. This is consistent with the history of nations throughout time: think back to the Aztecs’ rocky revenge tactics against Montezuma, Julius Caesar’s “Et tu, Brutus?” moment of discovery, the “Royal Ripper” buzz that linked the British Royals to a Freemason crew that killed as part of a secret ritual, and the witchhunts of Salem, which neatly segued to the witchhunts of Washington in the mid-20th century.

These days, conspiracy theories fly even more furiously. It’s not like Shakespeare’s day, when the latest messy piece of history had to be meticulously woven into an elaborate script in iambic pentameter. We have no time for that today, with thousands of conspiracy theorists flourishing, all competing for Web users’ time.

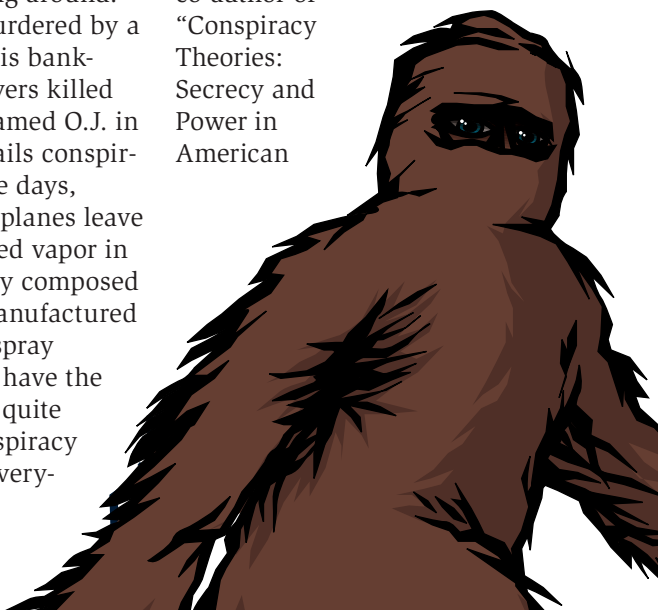
Shortly after Minnesota Sen. Paul Wellstone’s plane crashed last year, speculation immediately flooded newsrooms and Web sites, suggesting he was murdered. The “come one, come all” approach to this sort of thing has resulted in some wild rumors going around: Princess Diana was murdered by a Satanist cult, America is bankrupt, unemployed lawyers killed Nicole Simpson and framed O.J. in the process. The contrails conspiracy is all the rage these days, insisting that when airplanes leave white lines of condensed vapor in the sky, they’re actually composed of a toxic substance manufactured by the government to spray undesirables. You also have the mind-control theories, quite popular amid this conspiracy chatter. It seems like every-

body was a Manchurian candidate: Jack Ruby and Mark David Chapman, for starters.

What’s the Draw? The inclusive aspect of conspiracies is what attracts fans, experts say. Sure, many theorists side with a political party and draw lines in the sand (remember Hillary Clinton’s “vast right-wing conspiracy”). But many, like Jones, simply scout for a good story to tell and then latch on with a tight grip.

“Conspiracy theories are great, equal-opportunity doctrines,” says Jeff Hyson, a popular-culture specialist and assistant professor of history at St. Joseph’s University in Philadelphia. “People from both the left and the right can line up with them. We’re always trying to rethink the past in a way that’s satisfying to the present. That means we remember some facts and disregard the others. That allows us to recreate an interpretative framework that leads to a satisfying explanation of how the past turned out the way it did. People don’t want to accept the randomness of history.”

Let’s face it: a sizzling conspiracy can be a lot of fun – a guilty pleasure, perhaps, like a good, dime-store mystery novel. “Conspiracy theorists know how to tell a good story,” says Mark Fenster, co-author of “Conspiracy Theories: Secrecy and Power in American



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Culture" (University of Minnesota Press).

"That's key to their success. They bring meaning to an event.

They often have an implicit hero and always-explicit villains. It works in novels and film, right? So it works for these guys."

Author Jonathan Vankin has made a cottage industry of chronicling the conspiracy community. In 1995, he published "50 Greatest Conspiracies of All Time." By 1998, he had increased the number of conspiracies to 60. In 2000, he republished it with co-author John Whalen as "70 Greatest Conspiracies of All Time" (Kensington).

Vankin is a big fan of the faked moon-landing theory. "Yeah," he says, chuckling, "that's the one where we all thought the astronauts were on the moon. But they were really filming the 'landing' in a desert in Nevada, and the astronauts were actually getting lap dances from showgirls somewhere in Vegas." He said he feels NASA's recent effort is a smart move. "One of the things that fuels conspiracy theories is that they're always treated like nonsense when a key element of society feels that they aren't," Vankin says. "When the government is silent and ignores it, it just confirms there's a conspiracy out there."

However, the surge in popularity, for now, hasn't translated into untold fortunes for conspiracy theorists, experts say. Thomas says his business pays for itself, but little else. The payoff is essentially the satisfaction gained in convincing the people. And in the golden age of conspiracy, it's easier than ever to reach them.

"With the Kennedy assassination, it took a couple of years for the conspiracy theories to get out

Seven conspiracy theories for the modern age

Admit it: conspiracies are a guilty pleasure. Today's most popular conspiracies are a mix of new and old – some based on current events, others classic chestnuts that simply refuse to die.

■ **The faked moon landing.** It doesn't get any better than this one: the giant leap for mankind was actually a footstep in the desert. Not when you mix politics with outer space, along with a stinging deflation of "Right Stuff" mythology. Not when NASA spent \$15,000 to counter public impressions that the moon landing never happened. Among questions posed by skeptical theorists: how could the flag be pictured fluttering on the moon with no atmosphere or wind on the surface? Hmm.

■ **Princess Diana plottings.** You could fill more than one book with these theories: Diana was pregnant with Dodi Fayed's child at the time of her death, Diana was actually supposed to marry Bill Clinton, the British royals are actually murderous Freemasons, and so on.

■ **Contrails out to kill us.** Those harmless-looking white lines of condensed water vapor from airplanes that line the sky are actually a toxic substance sprayed on us by the government. Once again, NASA is among the handful of federal agencies putting on a PR offensive to counter the claims.

■ **The United States is bankrupt.** This is the fault of an "invisible government of monetary power," a financial elite "whose sick-brained policies have spawned depression, war and revolution," one scribe writes.

■ **The clones are coming.** Thanks to genetic engineering, no "real" folks will be sent out to fight in times of war – clones will. If you can't recruit the perfect soldier, just have a scientist make one in the lab.

■ **The "real" reason *Titanic* sank.** That was no iceberg. It was a German torpedo. Since then, the American and British governments have covered it up.

■ **The alien autopsy.** This oldie but goodie seems to sprout a sizzling new development every week. In the latest, theorists say the CIA actually staged the entire thing years ago, anticipating it would be exposed as a fraud, and, therefore, discredit those annoying UFO reports.

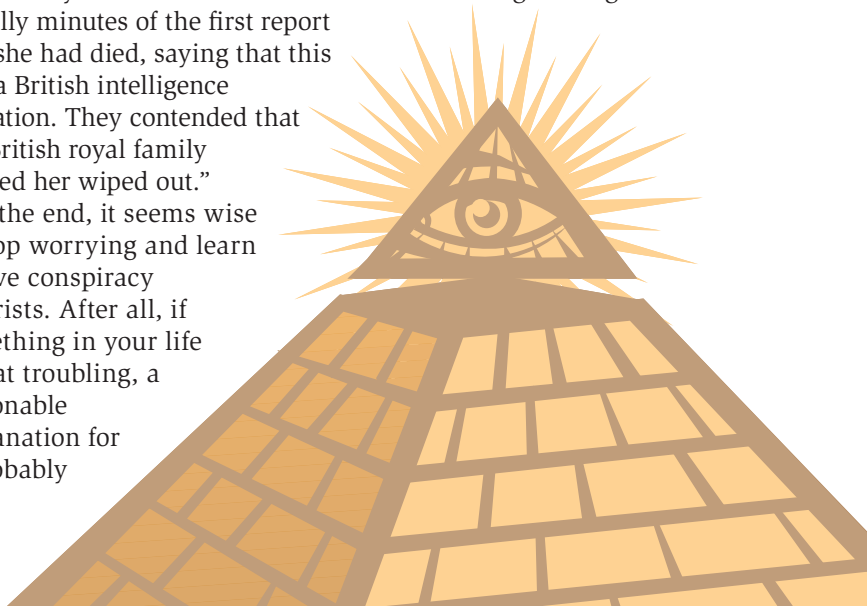
there," Vankin says. "It took that long to infiltrate the public mind until, by the 1970s, it was a popular school of thought. These days, the theories emerge instantly. The day after Princess Diana died, we got e-mails at my Web site within literally minutes of the first report that she had died, saying that this was a British intelligence operation. They contended that the British royal family wanted her wiped out."

In the end, it seems wise to stop worrying and learn to love conspiracy theorists. After all, if something in your life is that troubling, a reasonable explanation for it probably

exists. If not? Someone will be happy to invent one. ☞

Dennis McCafferty is a freelance writer from Herndon, Va.

Article design: Doug Rollison





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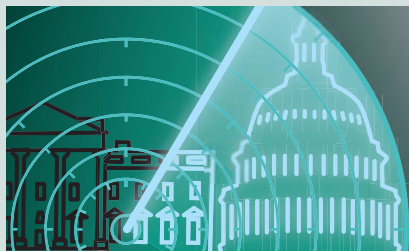


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Government girth

The federal government is getting thicker and taller, according to a new study released by Paul Light of the Brookings Institution. Light has found that thanks to Congress and U.S. presidents, new layers “of political and career management” are being added to the federal bureaucratic hierarchy.

In 1961, there were just 451 senior titleholders in the federal bureaucracy; today, there are 2,592. Some understandable explanations account for this. Light notes that the expanding role of the federal government, embodied by the emergence of new agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security, accounts for some of the growth. It also can be blamed on the use of promotions and titles rather than pay for rewards, “the effort to control the federal bureaucracy



through ever-denser networks of political appointees,” and the creation of new congressionally mandated positions, such as inspector general or chief information officer.

The consequence of what Light calls government “thickening” is slower decision-making because information

and directives have to pass through additional layers, less effective oversight because supervisors have to peel back so many layers, and bloated support staffs. For example, Light notes, “having a chief of staff has become a signal of one’s importance in the bureaucratic pecking order.” According to Light’s research, only one department secretary had a chief of staff in 1981. Today, all but one of the 15 department secretaries has chiefs of staff.

– A.W.D.

Phone a friend

The London Telegraph recently reported that Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, head of coalition forces in Iraq, ordered thousands of British troops indirectly under his command to prepare for attacks against Iranian military units that had surged into Iraq in July 2003. The British didn’t exactly follow the general’s orders, however. Instead, they deferred the problem to the foreign ministry, which worked out a solution after a week of telephone diplomacy.

The incident, which started when Iranian border guards tried to advance their observation posts in the Basra area, calls to mind a similar dispute at the end of the Kosovo air campaign in 1999. At that time, NATO military chief Wesley Clark and NATO peacekeeping commander Michael Jackson came to verbal blows over a Russian unit’s surprise advance

into Kosovo. When Clark ordered Jackson to deploy a British helicopter assault team to block the Russians at the Pristina airport, the British general

answered with a terse and chilling rejoinder:

“I’m not going to start World War III for you.” After

both men appealed to their national commanders – a practice permitted under NATO’s unwieldy war-fighting conventions – cooler heads in Washington and London concluded that NATO’s unity was more important than Kosovo’s airport. A humiliated Clark was forced to rescind his order.

In the case of the Basra border, it doesn’t appear Sanchez ever ordered an attack – just preparations for an attack. The British worried that engaging Iranian forces would have widened the conflict. Of course, one wonders if by dealing in such a gentlemanly manner with Iran the coalition unwittingly opened the door to further Iranian interference in postwar Iraq. It is now widely confirmed that Iranian agents

helped Iraqi rebel leader Moqtada al Sadr in late 2003 and 2004. Sometimes a show of force speaks louder than a phone call.

Al-Qaida South

Washington has put governments throughout Latin America on alert about a possible al-Qaida effort to gain a toehold in the region, according to the Associated Press. U.S. officials worry that Central America’s restive people, drug cartels and weak governments could provide a toxic mix for al-Qaida, making the U.S. homeland an easy target for cross-border attacks.

They are focusing their search on Adnan el Shukrijumah, who, like Osama bin Laden, is a Saudi ex-patriot. The Honduran government confirmed this summer that Shukrijumah was in the country, and the Panamanian government says the terror-cell leader was tracked moving through Panama prior to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

Whether or not al-Qaida is able to plant a cell in Central America, the threat is yet another reason why U.S. and Mexican officials need to redouble their efforts to secure the border in a manner that preserves legal immigration while preventing illegal immigration.

– Alan W. Dowd



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Diets of a different color

Traditional fare of fruits and vegetables need better color balance.

People would eat sweet potatoes on days other than Thanksgiving if Dr. Susie Nanney, assistant professor in the Obesity Prevention Center at St. Louis University, had her way. “People aren’t eating the fruits and vegetables that contain the most nutrients,” says Nanney, author of recent research in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. “People are quite frankly confused about nutrition.”

Most Americans recognize a healthy diet should include at least five fruits and vegetables, but they’re not making the most nutritious choices because messages about what to eat are unclear, research concludes.

The most popular fruits and vegetables – corn, potatoes, iceberg lettuce, apples and bananas – aren’t as rich in nutrients as other foods.

“While people understand they should eat a variety of fruits and vegetables each day, they are not translating ‘variety’ in a way to capture health benefits, such as reducing their risk of developing chronic diseases,” Nanney says. “I’m just asking them to expand their interpretation of diets.”

Nanney, a dietitian, notes that the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Department of Health and Human Services, the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association and other health groups offer conflicting messages about which fruits and veggies are most nutritious.

“You can see how the public gets confused by inconsistency in the messages,” she says.

Research shows that eating fruits and vegetables rich in



vitamins A and C, betacarotene and fiber – the so-called “powerhouse” fruits and veggies – reduces the risk of chronic diseases. Yet people don’t know which foods work better than others, Nanney says.

“Until nutrition messages become more consistent and direct, we may not see improvements in powerhouse vegetable and fruit intake behaviors to any great extent,” she says.

So which fruits and veggies have the most power in keeping you healthy? Those that do the best job in reducing the health risk for chronic disease are dark green leafy vegetables, yellow/orange vegetables, citrus, and cruciferous vegetables such as cabbage, turnips, broccoli, radishes, horseradish and alyssum.

Even those guidelines can be confusing, so Nanney suggests adding color to pack nutritional power in your diet:

■ **White.** Eat cauliflower more often than potatoes, onions and mushrooms.

■ **Green.** Add more dark lettuces, such as romaine and red leaf lettuce, spinach, broccoli and Brussels sprouts to replace iceberg lettuce and green beans.

■ **Yellow/orange.** Substitute more carrots, winter squashes, sweet potatoes, cantaloupe, oranges and grapefruit for corn or bananas.

■ **Red.** Select tomatoes, red peppers and strawberries in lieu of apples.

“When we look at how to get the most bang for your buck, it’s by eating these other fruits and vegetables instead of the traditional choices,” Nanney says. “We are not saying apples and other traditional fruits are not healthy choices. We are simply saying that other fruits choices offer higher benefits. Don’t stop eating apples and the like, but rather add variety to your daily diet by including some of those fruits and vegetables higher in nutrient value.”

Source: St. Louis University School of Public Health

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War illness under the microscope

VA, DoD partner to study adverse health effects of deployment.

BY DR. MINDY AISEN

Helping America's troops heal from the physical and emotional scars of war is VA's primary mission. To do this, we need to understand the effects of military deployments on health. For instance, how do deployments affect pre-existing medical conditions? What is the impact of certain toxins in the body? What long-term health risks do combat veterans face?

VA and other federal agencies have committed substantial resources toward unraveling this puzzle. Laboratory studies, for example, have shown that Agent Orange – one of several herbicides used in Vietnam to remove trees that provided cover and food for the enemy – is linked to a variety of serious health problems, including several cancers. As a result, Vietnam War veterans with these conditions can get medical care from VA, and they may be eligible for disability benefits.

In the case of Gulf War Illness, clear answers are more difficult to come by. GWI is a perplexing cluster of symptoms such as fatigue, pain and memory loss. In July, the *Annals of Internal Medicine* published findings from a 30-month clinical trial that tested the antibiotic doxycycline as a treatment for veterans with the condition. Bacterial infection is suspected as playing a role in the illness. But the study, involving 491 veterans at 26 VA and two DoD medical centers, found no benefit for the antibiotic. Other research is ongoing to identify other possible causes of GWI and find effective treatments.

Deployment Health Centers.

Much of VA's total research portfolio concerns health condi-

tions that can directly result from military service: post-traumatic stress disorder, vision or hearing loss, limb loss, spinal cord injury. This research, however, deals for the most part with clear causes and effects. Deployment research, on the other hand, aims to shed light on poorly understood connections between military service and health – as is the case with Gulf War Illness.

VA has a number of special centers dedicated to deployment health research and education. Foremost among them are the new War-Related Illness Centers in Washington and East Orange, N.J. Other resources include VA's Environmental Epidemiology Service and Environmental Hazards Research centers in Boston and San Antonio.

VA researchers in Boston recently administered neuropsychological tests to Gulf War veterans. Veterans who reported having taken pyridostigmine bromide – a pill given to some 250,000 Gulf War personnel as a preventive treatment against possible attack with the nerve gas soman – performed worse than those who had not taken the pill. PB is one of several neurotoxins under investigation as possible factors in Gulf War Illness.

Last year, VA and DoD researchers reported that veterans who had been deployed to the Persian Gulf in 1990 and 1991 are at nearly twice the risk for Lou Gehrig's disease – a usually fatal neurological disorder – compared to veterans of the same era who did not serve in the Gulf. Preliminary results from this landmark study prompted VA in 2001 to extend benefits to Gulf War veterans who subsequently develop the disease.

Prescreening and Follow-up.

Research to sort out the after-

effects of war is important. But VA and DoD are also taking preventive steps to safeguard the health of troops before and during deployment, and to make it easier to identify the source of post-deployment health problems.

Service personnel bound for Iraq or Afghanistan get individual checkups before going overseas. They receive vaccinations before deployment, so any side effects can be identified before they are "in country." They are more fully educated than their Gulf-War counterparts about personal protective equipment and possible exposure to toxins. Better records are kept of each soldier's duty locations and adverse health events. And VA and DoD physicians have standardized the way they examine military personnel after deployment.

A capstone of the collaboration between VA and DoD is the Millennium Cohort Study. This is the largest study of its kind ever conducted. VA and DoD researchers will follow as many as 140,000 military personnel for up to 21 years to track changes in their health. The effort – endorsed by The American Legion and other veterans organizations – began in 2001 and has already enrolled more than 79,000 service personnel. The study will help answer questions that have long troubled researchers about the health effects of military service. Findings will also guide DOD and VA policy on health care and benefits. For more information on the study, visit Millenniumcohort.org.

Mindy Aisen, M.D., is deputy director of research and development for the Veterans Health Administration.

Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their personal physicians when they have health problems.

Choose Life Grow Young with HGH

From the landmark book *Grow Young with HGH* comes the most powerful, over-the-counter health supplement in the history of man. Human growth hormone was first discovered in 1920 and has long been thought by the medical community to be necessary only to stimulate the body to full adult size and therefore unnecessary past the age of 20. Recent studies, however, have overturned this notion completely, discovering instead that the natural decline of Human Growth Hormone (HGH), from ages 21 to 61 (the average age at which there is only a trace left in the body) and is the reason why the body ages and fails to regenerate itself to its 25 year-old biological age.

Like a picked flower cut from the source, we gradually wilt physically and mentally and become vulnerable to a host of degenerative diseases, that we simply weren't susceptible to in our early adult years.

Modern medical science now regards aging as a disease that is treatable and preventable and that "aging", the disease, is actually a compilation of various diseases and pathologies, from everything, like a rise in blood glucose and pressure to diabetes, skin wrinkling and so on. All of these aging symptoms can be stopped and rolled back by maintaining Growth Hormone levels in the blood at the same levels HGH existed in the blood when we were 25 years old. There is a receptorsite in almost every cell in the human

body for HGH, so its regenerative and healing effects are very comprehensive.

Growth Hormone first synthesized in 1985 under the Reagan Orphan drug act, to treat dwarfism, was quickly recognized to stop aging in its tracks and reverse it to a remarkable degree. Since then, only the lucky and the rich have had access to it at the cost of \$20,000 US per year.

Many in hollywood's glamour sets, who never seem to age like you or I, have a special secret to tell, and even space pioneer and US Senator John Glen stays vital with HGH.

The next big breakthrough was to come in 1997 when the American Anti-aging Society, a group of doctors and scientists, developed an all-natural source product which would cause your own natural HGH to be released again and do all the remarkable things it did for you in your 20's. Now available to every adult for the price of a coffee and donut a day.

GHR now available n America, just in time for the aging Baby Boomers and everyone else from age 30 to 90 who doesn't want to age but would rather stay young, beautiful and healthy all of the time.

The new HGH releasers are winning converts from the synthetic HGH users as well, since GHR is just as effective, is oral instead of

self-injectable and is very affordable.

GHR is a natural releaser, has no known side effects, unlike the synthetic version and has no known drug interactions. Progressive doctors admit that this is the direction medicine is seeking to go, to get the body to heal itself instead of employing drugs. GHR is truly a revolutionary paradigm shift in medicine and, like any modern leapfrog advance, many others will be left in the dust holding their limited, or useless drugs and remedies.

It is now thought that HGH is so comprehensive in its healing and regenerative powers that it is today, where the computer industry was twenty years ago, that it will displace so many prescription and non-prescription drugs and health remedies that it is staggering to think of.

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PNC Wagner passes away

J. Addington Wagner of Battle Creek, Mich., championed many causes during his year as national commander of The American Legion, 1955 to 1956. He called for passage of the 1956 War Veterans Security Bill and formed a committee to closely study the results of the Bradley Commission on Veterans Pensions.

A World War II Navy veteran, Wagner was awarded a Purple Heart for injuries received during a Japanese air attack in which his leg was shattered. He later participated in the initial occupation of Japan.

After the war, Wagner joined Gen. George A. Custer Post 54 and began a 59-year Legion career. He served as post commander, adjutant and service officer, as well as Michigan's department commander from 1950 to 1951. He also served on the Americanism Commission and was a national vice commander. Wagner's esteemed career ended in July when he died at the age of 90.

Born Jan. 22, 1914, in Battle Creek, Mich., he earned a law degree in 1937 and served as chief assistant Battle Creek city attorney from 1946 to 1948. He was active in numerous organizations. Wagner is survived by his wife, Phyllis, and one son.



Becky Burch-Slack

Portland wins Legion World Series

Nova Seafood of Portland, Maine, put away the Kennewick, Wash., Bandits 2-0 in the championship game of the 78th American Legion Baseball World Series at Taylor Field's Hansen Stadium in Corvallis, Ore.

Portland beat all three pre-tournament favorites: Boyertown, Pa., Post 471 (52-2), Kennewick Post 34 (55-7) and Niwot/Boulder, Colo., Post 10 (72-6).

In the series' first round, Portland outlasted Niwot/Boulder 10-9. The team came back in the second round to take out Edmond, Okla., Post 111 9-5 and then marched into the favorite role after beating DeLand, Fla., Post 6, 8-3, to build a 3-0 record. No other team was unbeaten.

Portland scored three runs in the bottom of the eighth to tie with Boyertown, 3-3. Pitcher Scott Brown's RBI single down the right-field line won the game 4-3.

Mike Powers one-hit Kennewick

on route to the 2-0 win. The winning run came in the second inning, when Ryan Reid opened with a double to left field and advanced to third on a ground out. Reid stayed at third on an infield single by Andrew Dvilinsky. He scored when Neil Esposito grounded into a fielder's choice. Kennewick went for a double play, but Esposito outran it. Portland added one more run in the seventh.

Brown, Powers and Reid all made the All-Tournament team. Brown was named Most Valuable Player, and Reid received the James Daniel Sportsmanship Award. Powers, 9-0 for the season, struck out seven in the championship game. Brown led all players with 20 hits in regional and World Series play. He hit .411 and had 14 runs batted in. Reid was 5-0 on the mound in tournament play, with a 1.27 earned run average. He had 29 strikeouts in 21 1/3 innings pitched.

Death benefit reinstated

A federal law passed last December, the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003, restores Dependency & Indemnity Compensation (DIC) as well as eligibility for home loans, education and burial benefits to surviving spouses of veterans who died of service-related causes who remarried on or after their 57th birthday but

prior to the enactment of the new law. One catch: individuals must apply to VA before Dec. 16, 2004, for restoration of benefits.

To learn more about DIC and the Veterans Benefits Act, call VA toll-free at (800) 827-1000. For assistance in applying for benefits or to locate the nearest American Legion service officer, call (800) 433-3318.

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By Dr. Ron Gellatley

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Death really does begin in the waste clogged bowel. The trouble is that few people realize their bowel is clogged – the reality is that very few of us are aware that we are carrying a load of poisonous wastes in our bowel.

We think our problems have other causes. We do not understand that these wastes are affecting every cell and every tissue in our body. We cannot understand why we are tired all the time or why we have difficulty with moodiness and cannot cope. All too often our problems come from our bowel.

Look at it this way, **if you carry poisons in your bowel they must seep into your bloodstream.**

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Illness emanating from bowel problems is costing the country millions of dollars in sickness.

How much misery does irritable bowel, diverticulitis and stomach ulcers cause? What about constipation, the curse of modern civilization? It makes people feel ill all the time, causes sick headaches, lowers energy and slowly poisons us.

Your quality of life can be dictated by your bowel. It is hard to be the life of the party if your bowel is not performing properly.

How can anyone be full of joy with an irritable bowel? Look around you, where are all the happy people?

My new book, "Internal Health-The Key to Youth and Vitality" (already a best seller in Australia) is packed with vital information:

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tial if you suffer from diverticulitis.

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If you want to feel better, if you want to have boundless energy, if you want to feel terrific most of the time, regardless of your age, then this book is for you. I have discovered in over 15 years of practice that the major cause of feeling your age, loss of energy and ill health is an internal system that is not working.

How can anyone feel full of the joy of living with a colon that is full of wastes, a colon where the lining is inflamed, full of pain and poisoned with waste?

If you suffer with diverticulitis, constipation, irritable bowel, bloating and wind, this book is a must read! You learn step-by-step how to supercharge your entire digestive system... and you can feel better than you have in years.

This amazing book is already a best seller in Australia having sold for \$32.95 each. Right now as part of a special U.S. edition introductory offer, you can order a special press run of "Internal Health: The Key to Youth and Vitality" for only \$12.95 plus \$2.00 shipping. It comes with a 90 day money back guarantee. If you are not 100% satisfied, simply return it for a full refund – no questions asked.

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Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are published free of charge.

Due to the large number of reunions, *The American Legion Magazine* will publish a group's listing only once a year. Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

Other Notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim. Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name, tele-

phone number and e-mail address. Send notices to *The American Legion Magazine*, Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206, fax (317) 630-1280 or e-mail reunions@legion.org.

The magazine will not publish the names of individuals, only the name of the unit from which you seek people. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life memberships by their posts. This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership. Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to *The American Legion Magazine*, Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

To respond to a "Comrades in Distress" listing, send a letter to *The American Legion Magazine*, Attn: Comrades in Distress, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206. Include the listing's CID number in your response.

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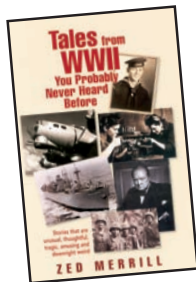
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AN ANGRY MOTORIST went back to a garage where he'd purchased an expensive battery for his car six months earlier. "Listen," the motorist grumbled to the owner of the garage, "when I bought that battery you said it would be the last battery my car would ever need. It died after only six months!"

"Sorry," the garage owner apologized. "I didn't think your car would last any longer than that."

A DEFENDANT, in a lawsuit involving a large sum of money, spoke to his lawyer. "If I lose the case, I'll be ruined," he said.

"It's in the judge's hands now," the lawyer said.

"Would it help if I sent the judge a box of cigars?"

"Oh, no," the lawyer responded. "This judge is a stickler for ethical behavior. A stunt like that would prejudice him against you. He might even hold you in contempt of court. In fact, you shouldn't even smile at the judge."

Days later, the judge rendered a decision in favor of the defendant.

As the man left the courthouse with his lawyer, he said, "Thanks

for the tip about the cigars. It worked."

"I'm sure we would have lost the case if you had sent them."

"But I did send them."

"You did?"

"Yes. That's how we won the case."

"I don't understand," the lawyer said.

"It's easy. I sent the cigars to the judge, but I enclosed the plaintiff's business card."

AN OBVIOUSLY pregnant woman and her husband sat in the obstetrician's waiting room. The wife looked at a lamp and commented on how lovely it was. Her husband gave her an anguished look and wailed, "Don't tell me you're starting to crave furniture!"

"I like these helmets. They make you hard to kiss."

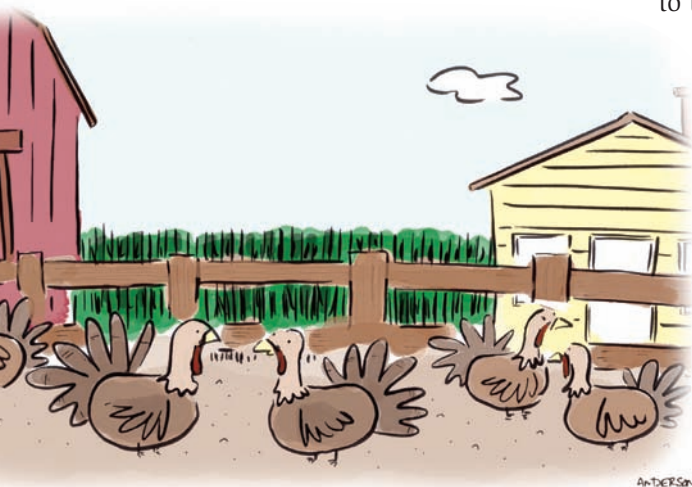
WHEN I WAS YOUNG we used to go skinny-dipping. Now I just "chunky dunk."

A FATHER, reading a Bible story to his young children, said, "The man named Lot was warned to take his wife and flee out of the city, but his wife looked back and was turned to salt."

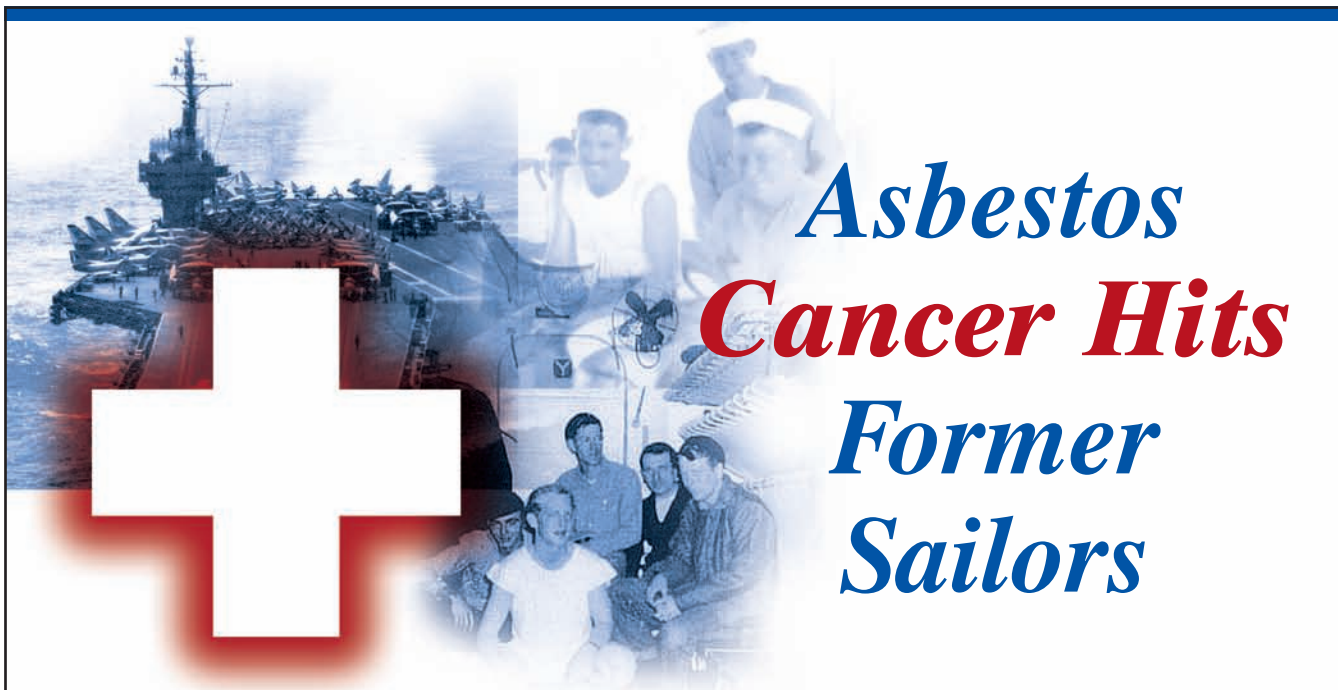
His son asked, "What happened to the flea?"



"Oh, yeah, Dan ... looks perfectly natural."



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